

At a General Court held at Boston, May 27. 1674.

THIS Court Orders, That the Reverend Mr. Samuel Torrey be Thanked from this Court, for the great and acceptable pains which he took in his late Election Sermon; And that he be desired to Print his said Sermon, with as much speed as may be. And that *William Stoughton* and *Thomas Clark Esqs*; *Capt. Hugh Mason*, *Mr. William Parkes*, and *Mr. Peter Boltley*, be Appointed in the Name of this Court to give him Thanks accordingly.

By the Court,

*Edward Ramson* Secret.

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AN  
EXHORTATION  
UNTO  
Reformation,

AMPLIFIED,

By a Discourse concerning the Parts and Progress of that  
Work, according to the Word of God.

Delivered in a SERMON Preached in the Audience of  
the General Assembly of the *Massachusetts* Colony,  
at *Boston* in *New-England*, May 27. 1674.

BEING THE  
DAY of ELECTION  
T H E R E.

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By *SAMUEL TORREY*, Pastor of the Church of  
Christ in *Weymouth*.

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*Iſa.* 30. 15. For thus ſaith the Lord God, the holy One of *Iſrael*, In returning and reſt ſhall  
ye be ſaved, in quietneſs and in confidence ſhall be your ſtrength, and ye ſhall not  
fear.

*Ver.* 18. And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and there-  
fore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of  
judgement: and bleſſed are all they that wait for him.

*Ier.* 3. 22. Return ye backſliding Children, and I will heal your backſlidings: I hold,  
we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.

*Rev.* 2. 7. He that hath an ear—let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches.

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*Cambridge*: Printed by *Marmaduke Johnson*. 1674.



To the Reader.

**T**HE God of our Fathers hath done great things for this his people, in the sight of the Nations. We have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what work God did in their dayes, how he did drive out the Heathen with his hand, and Planted them, how he did afflict the people and cast them out: for they got not the Land in possession by their own Sword, neither did their own Arm save them, but his right Hand and his Arm, and the light of his Countenance, because he had a favour to them. Yea, the Lord hath given us his good Spirit to instruct us, and hath nor withheld Manna from us, but hath turned this Wilderness into a *Canaan*, and here hath he given us *Rest* (the Land of *Israel* seldom rested longer) forty year and more: and all this while hath he been feeding and leading of us, by the hands of *Moses* & of *Aaron*. It would fill a Volume, to declare in how many respects the Lord hath dealt with us, as he did with his people in the dayes of old. He that hath said, *I will make the Wilderness a Pool of water, and the dry Land Springs of water, I will plant in the Wilderness a Cedar*, hath in an eminent degree fulfilled that word before our eyes. And we may conclude, that the Lord intended some great thing, when he planted these Heavens, and laid the foundation of this Earth, and said unto *New-England* (as sometimes to *Sion*) *Thou art my People*: And what should that be, if not that to a *Scripture Pattern of Reformation*, as to *Civil*, but especially in *Ecclesiastical* respects, might be here erected, as a *First fruits* of that which shall in due time be accomplished the whole world throughout, in that day when there shall be one Lord, and his Name one over all the earth.

## To the Reader.

Upon all which accounts, our not answering Divine Expectations concerning us, hath the more of evil, and of dangerous consequence in it. *Apostacy* in any people is a great provocation to the eyes of Gods glory, but much more in a people whom he hath brought under such manifold Engagements to the contrary, as is to be affirmed of us, in these goings down of the Sun. It must be confessed to the praise of his glory, that the Lord is not yet wholly gone from us; and there are grounds of hope, that he will not leave us nor forsake us, at least while that is yet it shall not be; For there are some (though alas! now but few) of the first Generation still surviving, who went after the Lord into this Wilderness, when it was a Land not sown, whose kindness God doth remember; and it may be hoped, that there shall be Peace and Truth in their days. It must likewise be acknowledged, that as for our *Israel*, the Leaders thereof, both in our Civil and Ecclesiastical state, are in some measure faithful. Scandalous evils when they break forth, are both witness against, and therefore the Lord will not impute them to the Land where they are committed. When did the Lord ever give up any people to utter destruction, but that first their Magistrates and Ministers were become corrupt? Therefore as yet our *Jerusalem* shall not become heaps, and the Mountains of the Lords house as the high places of the forest. Also the Lord who was still wont, as there were any beginnings of *Apostacy* in his people of old, to testify against them by his Spirit in his Prophets, hath raised up those in this Land, unto whom he hath given grace, and a Spirit of faithfulness to do the like, (witness the ensuing Sermon) which is a token for good.

Nevertheless, there are on the other hand awful Considerations, which may cause us to fear what the end will be; O that we were wise, that we understood these things! We have been, and (through grace) to this day are, a people near unto the Lord; but in that respect, we have the greater cause not to be secure. It is a very solemn Observation, which I remember

Commenius

## To the Reader.

*Commentarius* hath, speaking of those once-famous and glorious Churches in *Bohemia*, viz. That they were nearer to the Sanctuary, then other Churches; by reason of a more pure Discipline by them owned and professed; and therefore when Contentions and Apostacies prevailed amongst them, the Lord poured down his righteous Displeasures on them, and hath set them forth as sad Examples before other Churches. Let us lay it to heart. And it greatly concerns us so to do, for that there are sad evidences of our departures from the Lord in a woful degree, and awful symptoms of the Lords departure from us. Churches are not wont to cast off the good wayes of God at once, but gradually, it may be more generations then one may pass away first; so neither doth the God of all patience and grace cast off them, but in a gradual way of procedure. How many stands did the glory of the Lord make, ere it was quite removed, never more to return in the former lustre? Is it not so with this people? In what place can we behold the glory of the first Temple? Do not the ancient men that have seen the first House, weep over this? If we be not at all sensible of these things, our case is no less desperate then *Enoch's*. When gray hairs were upon him, but he knew it not. That people who were newly come out of the hands of those that sometime said to their Sould, Bow down, that we may go over; and whose present great Interest was to carry on Temple-work, when arrived at the full enjoyment of Peace and Liberty (and in many other respects circumstanced as we are this day) soon forgot their main and true Interest, being under the powerful and prevailing influence of a Worldly degenerating Spirit; and yet they said, *Wherein shall we return?* How many with us, are with the same Spirit making the same enquiry? The Reverend Author of this Sermon, saw it less needful to insist on the Answer to that, or to speak much by way of Conviction, because that would have been *Alumagere*, since God did help that Worthy Servant of his, who Preached the Election-Sermon, but the year immediately preceding,



## To the Reader

ceding, faithfully, fully, and convincingly to enlarge on that Argument. Moreover (though some deny it) it is a generall Concession amongst us, that vve are in a *declining Apostatizing State*, and therefore that *Reformation* is necessary. Our sins testify against us, and as for our iniquities vve know them: And yet vwhen it cometh to particulars, vve shall finde those calling that *Apostacy* and *Defection*, vvhich the Lord Iesus (I doubt not) will own for Truth and laudable Constancy another day, and consequently vwould have that put in practise for *Reformation*; which Christ vwill never own. *Brownism, Libertinism or undue straitning and confining the grace of that Covenant*, vvhich God hath made vwith our Fathers, is far from being the Interest of N. E. and most of all from being the Interest of *Massachusetts Colony*: Were our now glorified Fathers (*Winthrop, Dudley, Cotton, Hooker*, vwith the rest of those blessed Worthies, vwho vvere the Instruments, under God, of laying the Foundation both of our Civil and Ecclesiastical State) here amongst us, they would say to Let their Manuscripts and printed Books, which they have left behind them to succeeding generations, come in for Witnesses, and witness the *Platform of Discipline*, agreed on by the *Elders and Messengers* of all the Churches in this Colony, yea of all these *United Colonies*. Well did our blessed *Mather* also give in his Testimony, when speaking in the Name of the Lord, upon the like solemn Occasion as this Sermon was Preached on: *Do not* (said he) *wrong and marre an Excellent work and Provision, by mixing and weaving in various Principles and Practices, a Tole of Separation, Anabaptism, Moravian (Anarchical) Confusion, and licentious Toleration. If any would secretly mixt in, and coule such things as these, and make these part of our Interest, we must needs renounce it as none of our Cause, no part of the End and Design of the Lords faithful Servants, when they followed him into this Land which was not sown. Separation and Anabaptism are wonted in- vaders and seeming Friends, but secret fatal Enemies to Reforma- tion, as Paul in a case not much unlike, 1 Cor. 3. 10—15. In this*

work

## To the Reader.

mark here on foot, there was a good Foundation laid, viz. Christ as the onely Law-giver in his Church, and Reformation designed according to his Will, and Apostolical Pattern. If you should build the Hay and Stubble of such things as those, then verily (though sincere persons will be saved, and the main of the work may be saved and revived at last) yet sooner or later, there will come a fire that will burn up this Stubble, and then your poor Leaders, that would have led you the right way, may be remembered when it is too late. Do not under pretence of avoiding Corruption, run into sinfull Separation from any of the true Churches of God, (and what is good therein) or from the Children of the Covenant. Prize and hold fast the Covenant to you and yours. Thus that blessed man. It doth then concern us to take heed, that we do not mistake as to that Apostacy which is, and the Anastacy which ought to be amongst us. And surely it is a safe and undoubted Principle, which runs through that practical and profitable Discourse, to the which these lines are prefixed, viz. *That the great Apostacy of New-England is in respect of the Spirits of men, and general decay as to the power of godliness.* Were there a thorough Reformation in this matter, we need not fear any evil, but without this, no other Reformation will continue the Lords Presence with us. The first Design of New-England was purely Religious, but now we begin to espouse, and are eagerly pursuing another, even a Worldly Interest. Is not this the grand Procuring Cause of former and present Blappings on the fruits of the earth? And is it not for this sin, that the Lord is at this day seeming to speak as if the Trade of this poor Country should be ruined? These are solemn humbling Providences, which God would have us take notice of. Verily the Lord smiteth us, in that which hath been our Idol, i.e. the World, that so he may put us in minde of our first and true Interest, yea, that we may remember whence we are fallen, and repent, and do the first works.

Reader, The ensuing Sermon needs no Letters Commendatory, especially not from so mean a pen as writeth this. The Vote

## To the Reader.

passed in that Honoured Assembly to whom it was preached, desiring the Author to print what he had preached, is Recommendation sufficient. The acceptance also which this Sermon when delivered found with all good men, though of different persuasions, is an evidence, that the Preacher was under a special guidance and influence from the Spirit of Christ the wisdom of God. It was the Advice of one of the Ancients, that in Reading Books, we should regard *non scientiam sed saporem*: if we respect either of these, the following Discourse commends it self to the Reader; for that a judicious and savoury Spirit doth breathe in it and through it, no understanding Christian can deny.

Now the good Lord, who was with *Jehoshaphat*, because he walked in the *first wayes* of *David* his father, grant that we may be kept faithful to the *first Principles* of *New-England*, and that not onely as to our *Church-state*, in respect whereof, we are engaged to profess and practise the *Congregational-way* of *Church-Government*, as instituted by Christ, and held forth in the Scriptures of Truth, but also as to our *Civil-state*, which hath been built upon principles of Righteousness and *Sanctity*, the Laws and people of Christ being especially regarded therein, that so *Holiness unto the Lord*, may be upon us in all respects. Then may we expect the continuance both of our Civil and Sacred liberties. That it may be so, is the earnest prayer of him, who hath great reason to esteem himself,

*Boston, N. E.*

26. 3. 1674.

Less then the least of all Saints,

*Increase Mather.*

A N  
*Exhortation unto Reformation.*

REV. 2. 3.

*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works—*

**G**OD who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in times past to the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last dayes spoken unto us by his Son. This Book, wherein we finde our Text, it hath this peculiar unto it, that it bears the *Styl* and *Inscription* of this great Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, *Chap. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ.* And indeed it bears a very lively impression of his Image (as it were) in the *Frontispiece* of it, drawn out to the Life by a twofold description of him, in his *Person, Office* and *Work*, *Chap. 1. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. & ver. 13, 14, 15, 16*— as also throughout the whole Book, respecting both the Matter of it, and the Manner of delivery, in the Mystery and Majesty of it. It hath also this peculiar Eminency and Excellency, that it contains a *Systeme*, or the Sum of all Gospel Prophecie. It is a *Prophetical Revelation* of all Mysteries of Divine Dispensation, in the whole Series and Succession of it, in every Age and Generation, and in every state and condition of the Church, respecting both the Propagation of his Kingdome, and the destruction of his Enemies, untill all the whole Mystery of God be finished, and Time shall be no longer, (at least) untill the last and utmost Prophetical Period. It is the last great and general Prophecie, which doth compleat the Canon of Holy Writ, intimated *Chap. 22. 18. Therefore blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecie, &c. Chap. 1. 3.* John, the beloved and bosome Disciple, and last Apostle, is the Minister of this Revelation, *Chap. 1. ver. 1.* therefore the Dedication of it is from John, unto the Seven Churches in Asia, *Chap. 1. v. 4. John to the Seven Churches in Asia.* This general or indefinite Dedication, makes way for the particular *Inscription* of an Epistle unto the several Angels of those Churches, in the 2d and 3d Chapters. Our Text lyes in the first of these

Epistles, inscribed, *Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus*, Chap. 2. 1. I shall not detain you with any discourse concerning the Situation of the City, or Typical Relation of the Church of *Ephesus*; nor Ray upon an Artificial Resolution of the Context, by an Analytical Exposition of the Epistle; which are vulgar with Expositors. The way to our Text is easie and open: it lyes in that part of the Epistle which is *Narrative*. The words (as to Mode of expression) they are *Monitory*, and withall highly *Imperative* or Commanding. The duty commanded, it is to labour (according to direction given) unto a full and thorough Restitution from that Declension and Defection in Religion, which that Church was fallen into. In order hereunto, three things are proposed in the words, as parts of the work and duty commanded to be done.

1. *An awakening sight and sense of their declension and defection*; (in these words) *Remember from whence thou art fallen*. The word *Remember* here, it imports an awakening; convincing Remembrance: it is often used in Scripture to express a conscience and conviction of sin, Ezek. 16. 61, 63. — *from whence thou art fallen*, or *relapsed*, *slidden*, *backslidden*; plainly signifying, *Backsliding*, and *Apostasy*.

2. *A penitential Confession of, and humiliation under the sin of their declension and defection*; in this word, *Repent*. It signifies Repentance in the proper act of it, which is a sad and solemn recognition of, and reflection upon our past evil actions, with Confession and Humiliation.

3. *Reformation*; in these words, *Do the first works*: which signifie Reformation in the proper act of it, positive, practical Reformation; — *Remember from whence thou art fallen, repent, and do the first works*. It is as if our Lord Jesus Christ should have said unto this Angel and Church of *Ephesus*, Although thou hast been commendable (and I have commended thee) for thy strong and stedfast perseverance, by the great labour of thy Faith and Patience, in the sincere, pure, and powerful Profession of the Gospel, respecting both Doctrine and Worship, with extraordinary Zeal against Heresie and Apostacy, Hereticks and Apostates; and that also with extraordinary Courage and Constancy, under many great Temptations, and much and great Tribulation: and although thou hast been extraordinarily beautified and blessed with my Presence, in the exercise of my Kingly and Prophetical Office; though thou hast been Eminent, yea Excellent among the Churches; and although thou dost yet hold up thy Profession in the external Form of it, and dost therefore still deserve some Commendation: Yet know, O *Ephesus*, that thou art fallen; thou hast left thy first love, thou hast lost thy first life, thou hast deserted thy first works; thou art not what thou hast been, thou



thou art fallen into a state, frame, and way of backsliding and Apostacy. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and labour to recover thy self speedily from thy declension and defection, and to retrieve thy pristine and primitive Profession and practise of Religion, unto its former internal and spiritual Life and Power, from which it is chiefly that thou art fallen, or else I will withdraw my gracious Presence from thee, and come unto thee quickly in my wrath, and develt thee of all thy Priviledges, Church-Order, Ordinances and Administrations, of the Dignity and Beauty, yea of the very Being of a Church, by the Amour of the Candlestick: Remember from whence thou art fallen, &c. The words thus plainly opening themselves unto us, afford us this Doctrine.

**Doct.** That it is the present, and most important Duty and Concernment of any Collapsing or Back-sliding Church or Churches, to labour (under an Awakening, Convincing sight and sense (or under an Awakening Conviction) of their Declension and Defection) unto a full and thorough Reformation, from it, by Repentance and Reformation.

The Text it self is so good a Doctrine, it doth seem needless to invert the terms of it. It is enough to say, That it is the work and duty of any Church or Churches, which are in the like declining and decaying state, which this Church of Ephesus was in, to Remember from whence they are fallen, to repent, and to do their first works. It is the present, instant, and most important duty, it is indeed all the work and duty which our Lord Jesus Christ doth commend and propound unto, and press upon this Church in this whole Epistle, and so unto and upon all other Churches in the like state, and he doth propose it plainly and fully in all the parts of it, that they might have a full and distinct understanding of it, and direction unto it, that they might be through and effectual in the pursuance and performance of it. He proposeth it also as a most important duty and concernment, as that upon which depended their very Being and Standing as a Candlestick amongst the Candlesticks, as a Church among the Churches. He proposeth it as a work and duty which they had yet great advantage and encouragement to labour in, under the powerful exercise of his Kingly and Prophetical Office; and therefore he represents himself unto this declining Church (for their encouragement) as walking amidst the golden Canalesticks, and holding the Stars in his right hand; that is, in his full and whole Sufficiency to uphold his Church, in its Constitution, and in the pure and powerful Administration both of Doctrine and Worship; and by a powerful and effectual dispensation of his Spirit and Grace, to restore and recover

them from their present declension and defection. He also proposeth it as a work and duty requiring present, instant dispatch, which must be quickly done: and he presseth it, upon penalty of Unchurching Judgements, and so upon peril of gross, open, total, and final Apostacy, implied in the removal of the Candlestick, and finally moving of them hereunto, by a great and most gracious Promise of perseverance in case of obedience, *ver. 7. To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.* Thus you see how full both the Text and the Context are of this Doctrine. And this is also the great work and duty, which God did propound and press by all his Prophets, upon the Church of old, in their declining and decaying state, which for many Ages together they were in. It was Gods great work by the Ministry of those great Prophets, whose Prophecies are recorded in Scripture, to convince them of their *Back sliding* and *Apostacy*, and to persuade them to return by *Repentance* and *Reformation*. The general word of the Lord by those Prophets, it was *Turn, O backsliding children; Return, O backsliding Israel—Repent, and turn ye, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? &c. Jer. 3. 12, 14, 22. & 4. 1. & 18. 11. Ezk 14. 6. & 33. 11. Hos. 12. 6. & 14. 1.* It was the great work of those Prophets, to bring back this people unto God: *2 Chron. 24. 19. Yet he sent Prophets to them, to bring them again to the Lord.* It was the general cry of all the Prophets, *Zech. 1. 3, 4. Turn ye now unto me, saith the Lord, &c. Be not as your fathers, unto whom the former Prophets cried, Turn ye now—* Observe, Repentance and Reformation it was the general cry of the Prophets to that backsliding people: whence it doth appear, that it was their great and main work and duty, to Repent and Reform. I might further demonstrate, argue, and prove this Doctrine from the suitableness of this work and duty, unto a *backsliding* people, (it is the proper work of such a people;) as also from the necessity of it, and from the good and benefit of it, and from all *Topicks* of Reasons and Arguments: but it being of undeniable, and therefore of unquestionable verity, I shall take leave (for brevity's sake) to pretermitt what might or ought to be spoken for the more full Proof and Explication thereof, and proceed unto *Application*.

Wherein, I shall apply my self unto the Churches, and unto the People of *New-England*, so far (at least) as they may be spoken unto in one *General Assembly*; and I shall address my self unto You, as in the Name, so in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, by this threefold Exhortation. (1.) *Remember from whence thou art fallen.* (2.) *Repent.* (3.) *Do the first works.* These Epistles, and so these Exhortations, were

were directed to the Churches: Christ requires and calls for the Attention of the Churches, *ver. 7. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.* I am emboldened therefore to propose and press this general Exhortation, unto and upon the Churches, because the Text, the Doctrine, the Occasion and the Opportunity do lead me unto it; and because I have also thought, that God doth call me unto it, in the Improvement of such a Text, upon such an Occasion, in such an Assembly.

*Exhort. 1. Remember from whence thou art fallen.* Let this be an Awakening Watch-word from our Lord Jesus Christ, unto these slumbering Churches in this Midnight of deep Security, wherein the generality both of Christians and Churches, are disposing, yea composing of themselves to sleep, by indulging themselves unto carnal rest and ease, shutting their eyes against all awakening discoveries, and stopping their ears against all awakening voices; yea, although it be the voice of their Beloved: as the Spouse, *Cant. 5. 2, 3. I sleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh—I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? Surely an Awakening Watch-word is then most necessary and seasonable; and never more, then in sleepy and sleeping Times, when Judicial Security seemeth to be both one of the greatest Sins and Plagues of the Times; when God in just Judgement is pouring out of a spirit of deep sleep, and closing the eyes of men, as Isa. 29. 10. and giving a spirit of slumber, Rom. 11. 8. No doubt but this Church of Ephesus was deeply secure, under her deep declension: Spiritual declension doth incline both Christians and Churches unto Security; whilst the wise Virgins lamps wanted trimming, and the foolish Virgins lamps were gone out, they all slumbered and slept, Mat. 25. 5. as Christians or Churches decline, so they grow secure, and fall asleep. The Church of old, both Israel and Judah, were most prodigiously secure in the depth of their Apostacy: the Prophets did prophetic Peace, and the people did promise themselves peace, untill they had consummated both their Apostacy and Misery, Jer. 4. 10. & 6. 14. & 8. 11. *Ezek. 13. 16. 16.* Truly thus it is (too much) with us, the more sinful we grow, the more secure; the generality of the Generation growing more and more senseless, supine, stupid, sottish in their security: Hence, although we hear all kinde of Awakening Voices, and see many Awakening Sights; though the voice of God doth Cry by his Word, as *Zech. 1. 4. yea though it doth Roar by his Works, Amos 3. 8.* yet we are not awakened: Though there be a grievous and general Complaint and Cry of the great & Crying sins of the Times, yea*

although our sins do testify against us, unto our very faces, *Jer. 14. 7. Hos. 5. 5.* though our own wickedness doth correct us, and our backslidings reprove us, that we are forced to see and acknowledge, that *it is an evil thing and bitter, that we have forsaken the Lord our God, and that his fear is not in us, Jer. 2. 19.* though we begin to labour and to languish under the sad and lamentable effects and consequences of our sins; and are sensible, that our transgressions and iniquities are upon us, and that we pine away, and are likely to perish in them. *Ezek. 33. 10.* yea, although we our selves, in our most solemn Addresses unto Heaven, do complain and cry out unto God of our sins, iniquities, Backslidings and Apostacies, and verbally and formally express deep Conviction, yet we are not awakened nor convinced, but sensless and secure still: our publick Solemnities performed (by many) but as Solemn Formalities, do lull them to sleep in the deeper Security, *Isa. 58. 3.* Truly, the more means of Conviction, the more a secure people are sometimes hardened against Conviction. Security, it is a great hinderance, both unto Repentance and Reformation, therefore Christ doth propose this as the first part of the work, Remember from whence thou art fallen. So to the Church of *Laodicea, Rev. 3. 18.* *Anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see*—— (that is) See and be sensible of thy defection. God hath made it the work of divers of his faithful Servants, whom he hath of late sent and set to speak upon this Occasion in this general Assembly, to Awaken, and to Convince, to Plead with us in a way of Conviction, to Cry aloud, not to spare, to lift their voices like a Trumpet, to shew New-England their transgressions, and this people their sins, *Isa. 58. 2.* and surely untill we are thus awakened and convinced, there will be no hope of Reformation.

*Exhort. II. Repent.* So remember from whence thou art fallen, as to Repent. It must be a Penitential Remembrance, such a remembrance as doth both move, and lead to Repentance. *Ezek. 16. 61.* *Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed: ver. 63. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame: so Ezek. 6. 9. & 20. 43.* When and where there is such an awaking, convincing Remembrance, there will be Repentance. Surely God expects, and calls for a deep, thorough, general Repentance: Repentance in all the parts of it, the full exercise of it, the whole work of it, unto all the fruits, effects, and ends of it, expressed in Confession, Contrition, Humiliation, Supplication, from a right Spirit of Repentance. God calls for heart-breaking, heart-rending Repentance, *Isa. 2. 12.* *Render your hearts, and not your garments.* God expects to hear New-England

England (as Ephraim) bemoaning himself, *For I have sinned, surely, as I was accused, I repented, as I was instructed, I sinned upon me* (I might say, *as I was accused, you even confounded*). It is impossible that we should Re-  
form, except we thus Repent; for the foundation of the whole work of  
Reformation is laid in Repentance, the work of Reformation is wrought  
in Repentance: and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ layeth the burthen  
of all the work upon Repentance in the Feast, *Except ye repent, and ye  
Enchore. All, Do the first works*. So remember from whence thou art  
fallen, and repent, *as to do the first works*; that is, Reformation. And here  
chiefly lies my present business, viz. in pressing this part of the Ex-  
hortation. And the rather I shall take leave to insist a while upon it, as  
a suitable and reasonable word, because we have been *Original* in Re-  
formation, and a *Reformed* people, a people separated and set apart by God,  
to be the Subject of a more glorious and glorious Work of Reformation.  
Reformation hath been the design of New-England, and therefore Re-  
formation it is the Profession of New-England. This work of Refor-  
mation, it hath been (especially by this Generation) (not only) much  
neglected, but even (almost) utterly neglected, by a general declension  
and declension, which we are fallen into; so that we are now become a  
declining, and declining people. I have both seen, and there is a general  
Complaint and Cry for want of Reformation, it is generally confessed  
and acknowledged, that there is an absolute necessity of a speedy, tho-  
rough Reformation, and that without it we are an undone people. We  
have in our publick Solemnities made many solemn Vows and Promises  
of Reformation unto God, wherein we have too much *sworn* him  
with our lips, and *sworn* him without tongues, which *sworn* have  
not been *honest* with him, there is yet therefore an utter total neglect  
and defect of Reformation, no kind, no degree of Reformation, as  
little, and (in some respects) less hope and probability thereof, than ever  
before, and truly without speedy Reformation, our declension is likely  
to prove irreparable, and irrecoverable, and sinners growing every  
day more and more incorrigible, and incurable, and the state of the  
Generation more and more corrupted with a Spirit of Profaneness and  
Apostacy, and so *near to backsliding*. Hof. 1. 7. is so strong that it is too  
likely to be a *perpetual backsliding*. And that which is yet more than all,  
and most of all pressing, it is the danger that we are in of being given  
up *judicially* by God, unto a *perpetual* and *judicial* way of Back-  
sliding and Apostacy, if we do not speedily reconvert *themselves* to God, *like a backsliding  
haifer* — Ephraim is *joyous* to *shalt* let  
him alone. *Plal. 81. 11. So he gave them up to their own heart desires.* *Deut.*



Deut. 32:20. *I will hide my face from them: I will see what their end will be:* (q.d.) I will have no more to do with them in a way of grace and mercy, I will leave them to themselves, to finish their Apostasy, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, I will see what miserable, lamentable end they will bring themselves unto: and truly, if so, then we unto us, we shall soon destroy our selves. But yet, God is in mercy, waiting that he may be gracious, Isa. 30:18. and therefore, that which God is yet calling for, looking for, (yes to speak after the manner of men) that which God is longing for, it is our Reformation, as Jer. 13:27. *O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* These Considerations may move our Attention unto this Exhortation. And here I shall take leave to speak unto Reformation in general, and so not onely unto a reformation from our defection, but the progress of the Work of Reformation. God expects not onely that we should do our first work, but that our last works should be more then our first, which was the Commendation of the Church of Thyatira, Rev. 2:19. I shall therefore propose some general duties to be laboured in, in order unto Reformation, and endeavour (as God shall help) to raise my Discourse hereunto unto the present condition of this people, and these Churches.

First, *It should be our labour to get a new Heart and new Spirit.* This is the life and spirit of the work of Reformation, Ezek. 18, 30, 31. *Repent, and turn your selves from your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your mine: and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? When God doth work reforming grace, and renew his Covenant with his people, upon terms of Reformation, he doth first take away the corrupt, hard, impenitent, unbelieving, backsliding, apostatising heart, and gives them a new heart, and a new spirit.* Jer. 31:33. & 32:39. Ezek. 18:19. & 36:26. The foundation of the work of Reformation, it must be laid in a new heart, because the original of our defection and Apostasy, it is in the heart: and therefore God every where complaineth of these backsliding people, that they had an unclean, unchristian heart, Jer. 9:26. *a whorish heart.* Ezek. 6:9. *that their heart was set upon their iniquity,* Hol. 4:8. Truly, so it is, the very heart of New-England is changed, and exceedingly corrupted with the sins of the Times: there is a Spirit of Profaneness, a Spirit of Pride, a Spirit of Worldliness, a Spirit of Sensuality, a Spirit of Gain saying and Rebellion, a Spirit of Liberalism, a Spirit of Carnality, Formality, Hypocrisy, and Spiritual Idolatry in the Worship of God. Sinners are sprinkled unto, and with the sins of the Times, those sins are even rooted and grounded in the Spirit of the Generation, as Jer. 17:1. *The sin of Judah*

*Judas* it is grace upon the will of their heart, so that there is no hope of Reformation, except we make us a new heart, and a new spirit. And truly this is the reason that we do not reform; that we cannot reform, though we do promise and vow Reformation unto God. *Dir. y. 29.* This people have will said, *O that there were such an heart in them.* (q. d.) the great thing which this people want is an heart: Truly, so the great thing which *New-England* doth want, it is a new Heart, and a new Spirit. Here then we must begin; and in order hereunto, *Nov. 21. 1632.*

1. *All sincere Christians must begin this work of Heart-reformation, by labouring to recover your Souls out of your Spiritual Declensions, in grace, and in the life and power of godliness.* This Spiritual Declension, it is in the first, and most strict and proper sense, that *living of our first love*, reprov'd in the Context; and therefore restitution from this Spiritual Declension; it is in the first most strict and proper sense, *Doing of our first works*, commended in the Text: and therefore sincere Christians are first, and most properly concerned in this duty of *doing of their first works*. How generally and deeply Christians are thus declined, both their hearts and lives do sadly testify. It is the great and general complaint of all sensible Christians, *O their decays, and declensions!* hence little of the life and activity of grace, hardly enough to evidence the sincerity of it, clearly and comfortably, *either to themselves or others*; little of the life of Obedience, either in duties of Religion or Righteousness; much Carnality, Formality, Hypocrisy in the Worship of God, both in publick, private, and in secret, in all their Converse and Communion both with God and Saints, their Souls languishing under a Spiritual Consumption, and those things which remain, *eventually to die*, *Rev. 9. 2.* It is true first of Christians, then of Churches (in this sense) That there is a universal deadness upon the hearts of Churches, hence great unprofitableness and unfruitfulness under all Ordinances, sin more unfortified then ever, their hearts and lives deeply corrupted with the sins of the Times, and many Christians fallen into a very dangerous way of Communion with, and Concomity unto the wicked World: and all this appearing upon some of those, whose first life, love, sincerity, purity, and eminency in grace and godliness, was sometimes a Beauty unto these Churches. *O how is our gold become dim? and our fine gold changed?* *Lam. 4. 1.* *How is our silver become dross, and our mine mixed with water?* *Isa. 1. 2.* *How are Zion's Naxibers changed in these things?* *Isa. 47.* How are the fumes, the Conscience, the Conversation of many Christians changed? O Christians, what shall we say? what shall we do? what will become of us? yea, what will be-

come of Religion in this next succeeding generation? If you live and die under your declensions, so truly many Christians are likely to do being fallen into such deep security under their declensions; that they are not like to be awakened, untill the Cry be made at Midnight, *The Bridegroom cometh*, and must belie themselves very hard to trim their Lamps, in time, to enter in with him. O Christians, *It is your Spiritual Declension that is the main root of the degeneracy of this Noble Vine*, Jer. 2.21. It is your leaving of your first love, which doth make way for the removal of the Candlestick; your Spiritual declension will lead the way unto, and lay the foundation for, the general and total defection of these Churches in succeeding generations: therefore, as the defection hath been in part begun by your declension; so the work of Reformation it must be begun by your restoration. It is impossible that ever these Churches should be restored unto their first Spiritual prosperity, and flourishing state, unless Christians do first recover their first love, life, sincerity, fervency, purity, activity, eminency in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty, and in all practical piety, both in heart and life. O how can you hope to lye down in your Graves with peace and comfort, before you have done what in you lyeth in the Work of Reformation? How can you die in peace, under your Spiritual declensions, and thereby leave Religion decaying and dying, and these Churches, and this Generation, your poor Posterity, sinking under a general and total defection? Sure, in vain, and frustrate will be all your prayers, desires, hopes of a Reformation, except that you Christians do thus begin, and lay the foundation of the work in your own hearts before you die.

2. *The work of Heart-reformation, or making of a new heart, consisteth in Conversion, and Regeneration.* This is the most full and proper sense of those words, *Ezek. 18.1. Make you new hearts, and new spirits; for why will ye die?* so *Ezek. 36.1. Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?* It is a Call to the unconverted; when God doth restore his people from any deep and general declension; and renew his Covenant with them, he doth promise, and actually pour out abundances of converting grace; and so revive and renew the work of Conversion. So *Ezek. 36.26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: I will put my spirit within you.* Let me be bold to say, If ever these Churches be thoroughly recovered, it will be, it must be by such a dispensation of converting grace, unto an unconverted generation. It is Unregeneracy, that is the radical and total degeneracy of any.

any generation; whereby it is wholly turned into the degenerate plant of a strange Vine, unto the Lord. Here will be our deepest, and most dangerous defecion; and that which will prove inevitably ruining unto these Churches, unless the Lord have mercy upon us. O our unbelief, and disobedience unto the Gospel, our rejection of Christ and his Kingdom! It is a most sad and lamentable sign, that these Churches, and Religion, are falling into an irreparable, irrecoverable decay. That there are so many of the generation growing up under the Ministry of the Word, and the improvement of all means of grace, in their Unregency, under the prevailing power of Spiritual Apostacy and (as we have cause to fear) under a dreadful dispensation of divine Justice, by Spiritual Plagues and Judgements, being justly given up by God, unto a spirit, frame, and way of unprofitableness under a Judicial Ministry, sent to make their hearts fat, lest they should be converted, as *Isa. 6. 10*. — O it is a fearful word, *Lest they should see with their eyes, &c.* — and convert, and be healed. Observe, there is no help, no healing for any people, if the work of Conversion cease amongst them. Truly, it is a matter of very sad Consideration unto us, that the work of Conversion doth fail, and is falling more and more, in many (if not) in most Congregations: although we have cause, with thankfulness, to acknowledge the Presence and Power of the Spirit of God (so far) with his Ministry, that there is yet some fruit of their labour appearing in the work of Conversion; but alas! not with proportion unto the great increase of the generation. O how rarely do we hear of a sound work of Conversion, held forth with full and clear demonstration of the sincerity of it! O how few such Converts are there, as do evidence their Conversion by a powerful, practical Profession of Religion? Multitudes there are growing up in their Ignorance, Atheism, Unbelief, and Profaneness, who receive no impression at all by the Word of God; and many others who do receive some degrees of common grace, who yet fall away by Spiritual Apostacy, who prove either vain, profane Professors, or close Hypocrites, or gross Apostates. Truly, unless God in infinite Mercy revive and uphold the work of Conversion, there will be no hope, we shall perish under this our Spiritual Apostacy, which is begun: for if the work of Conversion fail, all the sins of the Times will be multiplied and aggravated, and unconverted sinners will be in just Judgement given up to God, unto the power of those sins, so that our sins will become our plagues, and those incurable. O that all unconverted sinners might be moved, to wait earnestly upon God, in the improvement of all means for converting grace, and bemoan themselves.

selves before God under their Unregeneracy, Impenitency, Unbelief, then there would be hope in our end, *Jer. 31. 17, 18.* *There is hope in thine end, saith the Lord.* It followeth, *I have surely hated Ephraim, bemoaning himself thus.* Turn thou me, and I shall be turned: the onely hope which was, and which yet remains in the End of this people, is ariseth from the reviving of the work of Conversion amongst them; this shall be their resurrection. And this seems to be a promise of that glorious dispensation of converting grace, which shall be effectuall unto their last Conversion: This hope there is yet in our end, that the work of Conversion shall yet have a powerful progress in these Churches; and then we shall return, and revive as the Corn, and grow as the Vine, *Hos. 14. 7.*

Secondly, In order unto the promotion and progress of the work of Reformation, we must renew our Covenant with God. By Covenant, here we understand the Covenant of Grace, as it is constituted and confirmed, and savingly dispensed in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, as the onely Mediator thereof, together with all the Means, both of the visible and Spiritual dispensation thereof, in a way of holy Communion with God and Saints. That Covenant whereby God is our God, and we his People. Now this Covenant, it is alwayes in some degree or other violated and broken, by defection and apostasy; and therefore God calleth it, *Forsaking of his Covenant*, *Jer. 22. 9.* *Breaking of his Covenant*, *Jer. 31. 32.* *Transgressing of his Covenant*, *Hos. 6. 7.* Hence, when God doth reject any people for their Apostasy, he is said to breake his Covenant with them, *Exod. 32. 10.* Hence also we read, that the people of God have alwayes persecuted the work of Reformation, by renewing their Covenant with God, *2 King. 11. 17.* & *23. 3.* And when God gives reforming grace, he alwayes renews his Covenant with his people, *Jer. 31. 33.* God singled out our Fathers, and separated them unto himself, in a more peculiar manner, as a people with whom he did particularly, & as it were personally renew his Covenant, and more amply and explicitly confirm it, that in renewing of it, he might more fully reveal it, and restore it unto the more pure and primitive way of Administration, according to his own Institution. We cannot say when, where, or with whom, God hath in more special grace and favour renewed his Covenant, that they might be a special people unto himself, above all people, as *Deut. 7. 6.* Therefore if we hope for the confirmation of Gods Covenant with us; it is our duty, after our defection, to renew it.

1. It is the work of sincere Christians, who are actually and personally in Covenant with God, (who yet have (by the omission of Covenant-duties,



and by the commission of Covenant-breaking (as) walked loosely, remissly, inconsistently, unsteadfastly, and in all respects very unworthily, under Gods holy Covenant) to renew your Covenant with God, by the renewed stipulation of your Souls unto God, under the Soul-binding Obligations of the Covenant. To renew your Covenant-Engagements unto God, under the renewed sense, experience, power and efficacy of New-Covenant grace, by which you have had the experimental knowledge of Gods Covenant, in the saving Mystery and Sufficiency of it, as a Covenant of Life, as in *Psalm 25. 14. The secrets of the Lord are with those that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant*, and whereby God doth put his Covenant, write his Covenant in your hearts, *Jer. 31. 33.* Thus renew your Covenant by Faith, with an holy resolution, to cleave unto God fully and firmly, to walk with God closely and constantly, in his holy Covenant, with fear and reverence, holily, humbly, cheerfully, joyfully, thankfully, faithfully, and fruitfully, in a way of Communion, with full and abundant satisfaction in your Interest in, and enjoyment of God as a God in Covenant, as *David, 2 Sam. 23. 5. For this is all my salvation, and all my desire.* O Christians, it is your work to uphold Gods Covenant in the life, spirit and power of it, and unto all the spiritual and saving ends of it, as a Covenant of life, in these Churches.

2. It is the duty of all those who are not yet savingly in Covenant with God, actually, personally, and professedly to take hold upon the Covenant. Gods Covenant, it must be thus renewed with his Church, in every Age of it, in order unto the continuation and succession of it, from generation to generation, and thus to renew the Covenant, is the proper work of this Generation, of those who are the Children of the Covenant, that is, to lay hold upon the Covenant, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator of the Covenant, and in God through Jesus Christ, as a God in Covenant with you: and to by giving up your selves unto God, under the Bond of his Covenant, to walk with him, and to live unto him, in a way of Faith, and Gospel-obedience, as his Covenant people. Thus to lay hold on Gods Covenant, and actually, personally, and professedly to Enter into Covenant with God, is the Foundation of your being and standing before God as his people, and indeed of your whole Religion. O how many be there of this Generation, growing, and grown up in these Churches, under the visible dispensation of the Covenant, who do rest, and trust, and boast in their visible Covenant relation, and all the while live without saving Covenant relation unto God? Yea, how do they profane, pollute, neglect, reject, condemn Gods holy Covenant, as profane *Esaus did, Gen. 27. 32. What profit*

profit, shall this Birthright do me? — Thou Esau despised his Birthright. Know then, all you who are the Children of the Covenant, that it is by your taking hold upon the Covenant, that the Covenant is established and confirmed unto you as your Covenant, and your Interest, in the Covenant asserted. For, whatever your visible right and interest unto, and in the Covenant may be, and whatever your Confidences may be, yet if you do pollute, profane, neglect, reject, despise, contemn Gods Covenant, and not lay hold upon it, God will certainly take away his Covenant from you: Gods Covenant will certainly fail unto such a Generation, and then these Churches will fall to the ground. If you should so reject Gods Covenant, and cast off Gods Covenant, God would reject and cast off you, as altogether unworthy of his Covenant, and of the blessings of it, and lay off you, as in *Psalm 81. 11. What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth?* You ought highly to prize and esteem your visible right and interest unto, and in the Covenant, hold it, assert it as an inestimable Priviledge: but O take heed of abusing of it unto carnal Confidence, and of resting in it, and take heed of slighting and neglecting of it. You are the Children of the Covenant; but yet think not as if within your selves, we have Abraham to our Father, for God is able of the very stones to raise up Children unto Abraham. And the Ax will be laid to the root of the tree, and every tree, &c. *Mat. 3. 9. 10.* You are the Children of the Kingdom, but remember, that the Children of the Kingdom may be cast out, and that will cause weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. *Mat. 8. 12.* It is by laying hold upon Gods Covenant, that we do lay hold upon God himself. We may fear, (and thus justly), that God will depart from us: and the great enquiry is, How we may keep God with us? Surely it lies much, yea most, and almost onely in you, to retain the gracious Presence of God in these Churches, by taking hold upon him by his Covenant. If you reject the Covenant, you reject God, and put him away from you: God will be gone, and refuse to gainst you, as in *Psalm 81. 11.* but my people would have none of me. And truly if God depart from, and reject you, there will be no place found for Repentance, though you may seek it carefully with tears, as Esau did, when it was too late, *Heb. 12. 17.* If you should go on generally and totally to neglect and reject Gods Covenant, God will at last break the Tables of Beauty and Bands: that is, break his Covenant and remove it utterly from us, as *Zech. 1. 10. 11.* God hath not yet done it, he hath not yet disowned us: but yet let me say, God hath not yet visibly and signally owned us, by renewing and confirming his Covenant

with us, in such a way of special grace and favour, as he did with our Fathers, because we have not so owned him, we are not yet so established in our standing under the Covenant, as they were. *It is yet doubtful what God will do with this poor Generation,* only God is yet waiting upon us, and proving and trying of us, to see whether we will take hold upon his Covenant, and upon himself by his Covenant, yea or no; and upon this Point will turn the weal or woe of this present, and of succeeding Generations. O that we understood how much we are concerned, thus to renew our Covenant with God!

Thirdly, *Do the first works in all things pertaining to the Worship of God.* After we have made us a new Heart, and renewed our Covenant, our next great work in a way of Reformation, is to recover the Worship of God from those decays which it is fallen into. The great work of Reformation in the Church of old, it was much, and most about the Worship of God, which is most properly Church Reformation: and here our main work is, to recover ourselves from that decay which we are fallen into, respecting the internal spiritual power and purity of Worship. *Let us first turn to the first duty to the Worship of God; both internal and external, which is the duty of Worship, and all Ways, Means, Ordinances of Worship.* It was a very high esteem of, and dear love unto, and delight in the Worship and Ordinances of God, whereby our Fathers were distressed, and moved to follow God into his Wilderness. O the first love of New-Englands first Europeans, the kindness of her youth, when she first followed God into this Land, meekly, and only out of love unto, and delight in his Worship and Ordinances! God remembers it, as Jer. 2. 2. And truly, we ought to remember it also, with shame and confusion of face, under a sense of our loss of that love, and our (too much) slighting, neglecting and despising the Worship and Ordinances of God. O this is the original of all our decays in the Worship of God: the heart of the Generation, the heart of New-England is much gone from the Worship and Ordinances of God; though we pretend and profess much zeal and love, yet our heart begins to be far removed from them, Isa. 29. 13. *Forasmuch as this people draw near to me with their mouth, and do honour me with their lips, but have removed their heart far from me, saith the Lord.* Ezek. 3. 1. *For with their mouth they say, we love thee, but their heart is far from thee, and they are without faith.* O the heart of New-England is gone much from the Worship of God, after the World, yea truly, Christians themselves are much fallen in their love, esteem, and delight of, and in the Worship of God. O

then let us labour to recover our first love, and to set our hearts to the Worship and Ordinances of God; *Draw near, O ye your hearts unto all these things which I command you, for it is not a vain thing for you, for it is your life.* Our very Hearts and Souls must be set upon, and engaged unto the Worship of God, as a very dear and precious Interest, so as to personify above our chief joy, *As I live, O Lord, I will love thee.* The love of the generality of Worshipers, to the Worship of God, is an evident sign of our devotion to him.

2. We must labour to recover our first zeal for the House of God, in keeping, upholding, and maintaining the Worship and Ordinances of God. Cleave to them and keep them up, by a lively, constant, steadfast, sincere and holy Profession, by an humble, professed, practical subjection of your very Souls unto them; by a constant, diligent, religious, and profitable Attention upon them, and improvement of them with inward love, peace and union; in a way of pure and holy Communion. Labour also to uphold the Worship and Ordinances of God, by *teaching of them diligently to your Children, Draw near, O ye your hearts unto all these things which I command you, for it is not a vain thing for you, for it is your life.* Train up your Children in the House of God, unto the Worship of God, that they may be prepared to uphold the Worship and Ordinances of God in their places, in their generation. We hath, since the reformation of the work of *New England*, to build the House of God, to serve the Worship and Ordinances of God. But now (alas!) it is (so much) our work, to pull down the House, Worship, and Ordinances of God. Most of the sins of the Times, and of the generation, have a strong and direct tendency thereto. We are sinning down and sinning away the Worship and Ordinances of God; especially by our Pride, Wantonness, carnal Confidence in our visible Liberties and Privileges, our great ease and ease, Carnality, Formality, Hypocrisy, Spiritual Idolatry in the Worship of God, our manifold both gross and more spiritual Profanations and Pollutions of the House, Worship and Ordinances of God, by which will grow, and prevail among us, and many of the most notorious and scandalous sins of the Times getting into Churches, and corrupting of Churches, do sadly signify, at least great danger of the downfall of the House, Worship, and Ordinances of God, *Jer. 7. 10, 12.* But that which is yet most sadly signified, it is, that there is not likely to be a people fit to uphold such pure Churches, Worship and Ordinances, (at least) nor in the internal, spiritual power and purity of them. If we do consider how much both Civil and Religious Education is neglected, and if we look upon the sad face of the Rising generation, and see how much of Ignorance, Atheism, Profaneness, Disobedience, Rebellion and Irreligion doth already appear

appear in the Countenance of it; what an ungracious, irreligious generation there is likely to arise among us, unless God in infinite mercy work a great and wonderful change, our hearts may well tremble to think *what will become of the worship and Ordinances of God in the next Age*. Many there are hopeful; but alas! how few, in comparison with the Numbers of this numerous generation. Here is a *second* generation arisen, and a *third* and *fourth* generation arising apace, and truly we have cause to fear, that every generation will be less hopefull then other, untill at last, that wofull Saying be verified of us, which is spoken *Judg. 2. 10.* *And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord.* O unless God work graciously to save these degenerating generations, there will be small hope of the long continuance of the pure Worship and Ordinances of God here: the Worship of God and Religion, will either revive and live, or else utterly decay and die, with the Rising Generations. Unto this we may further adde, the *graduall removes of the Glory*, the disappearances of the Divine Presence, the departures of God from his own House; a sad sign that *our House* will be e're long left unto us desolate. O how much then are we concerned to labour (as much as in us lyeth) by all means to uphold and maintain the Worship and Ordinances of God in their spiritual power and purity, least the *Glory* should depart from this *Israel*, and the Light of the Gospel be again utterly extinguished in this Western World.

3. *We must uphold and maintain our first love unto, and zeal for the external purity (which through the grace of God is yet continued unto us) in the worship of God.* The voice of Christ unto these *New-England Churches*, is as unto the Church of *Thyatira*, *Rev. 2. 25.* *That which thou hast already, hold fast until I come.* Keep and preserve pure Worship, purity in the Worship of God: preserve the *primitive purity* of these Churches, according to their Reformed Constitution by *Divine Institution*; that is, *pure instituted Churches*: purity in the Constitution of Churches, is the ground-work of pure Worship. Preserve a *pure Ministry*, constituted exactly according to Gospel-order, respecting all the Offices of it, the Power, the Investiture, the Exercise, the whole Work and Service of it; such a Ministry as our Lord Jesus hath instituted and appointed, *Christs Ministry*. Preserve these pure Gospel-ordinances, the Ordinances of Christ: *Admit of nothing as an Ordinance of worship, but that which Christ hath instituted and ordained*; and keep the pure Ordinances of Christ, in the *purity* of them, in the Gospel *simplicity* of them, without any corrupt Mixtures in, or with any Ordinance of Christ, which is ordinarily the first inlet of corrupt Worship



into most Reformed Churches. *O* let us keep and cleave unto naked Ordinances, simple Ordinances; the Crystalline purity of the waters of the Sanctuary, which are, as they arise and flow from the Fountain of Divine Institution, clear as Crystall, *Rev.* 22. 1. Preserve purity of Administration, respecting both the Power, Subject, and Order of Administration. Preserve pure and holy Order in the Administration of every Ordinance, *1 Cor.* 14. 40. This holy Order is the Beauty of Churches, *Col.* 2. 5. Disorder, it is a general Corruption in Worship; it corrupteth both Churches, Ordinances, and Administrations; and so it makes the House of God like a Den of Thieves, *Mat.* 23. 13. O Christians, this purity of Worship, it hath been the Eminency and Excellency of these Churches, not yet lost as to the external Form of it. It was Gods design and work, not only to set up his Worship in New-England, but to set it up in the purity of it, by a purging, refining Reformation. God did therefore qualifie his Reformers with extraordinary Humility, Sincerity, and holy Zeal for purity of Worship; and made extraordinary discoveries of his Minde and Will, concerning his Worship, unto them: He did shew them the Pattern, the Platform (as I may say) of his House, that they might shew it unto us, *Ezek.* 43. 11. O how much then are we engaged to preserve purity of Worship? Purity, it is the Excellency of Worship, it is the Beauty and glory of Churches, it is that which maketh Churches shine, as golden Candlesticks; it makes Churches the Beauty of Holiness, *Psal.* 29. 2. & 110. 3. It makes the Church to appear in her Spiritual Beauty, in her ornaments, as a Spiritual Bride adorned and trimmed for her heavenly Bridegroom. That purity of Worship, which shall be after the destruction of Antichrist, will be the chief perfection, if not the consummation of the Gospel Dispensation, *Rev.* 21. 2. 3. & 22. 11. Then let us be moved to prize and preserve purity of Worship. And to this end, we must subject our selves, our very Souls, freely, fully, & most sincerely, unto the Power, Authority, Rule and Government of Christ, as it is Regularly, Ministerially exercised and administered in his Church, in the Administration of all his Ordinances. Exalt Christ in the Exercise of his Kingly office in his Church: whilst Christ is walking amidst the Churches, holding the Stars in his right hand, they will remain golden Candlesticks. If we do debase Christ, and set up our own wisdoms and wills, in and about the Worship of God, then farewell to purity of Worship. Again, if we will preserve purity of Worship, we must keep up internal, spiritual purity and holiness of heart, in the Worship of God: we must be holy, pure, spiritual Worshippers; we must keep up the Worship of God in the internal, spiritual

Spiritual power and purity of it in our hearts; these pure Churches, Worship, and Ordinances, will not, cannot stand, without internal, spiritual power and purity. If we do corrupt the Worship and Ordinances of God by our Carnality, Formality, Hypocrisie, and Spiritual Idolatry, and such like spiritual corruptions, and heart-abominations, in the exercise of it, God will take it from us. It is our Spiritual and Heart-Apostacy, from internal, spiritual power and purity of Worship, that is the deep and most dangerous defection of these Churches in Worship. And although we do yet retain purity of Worship in the external Form of it, yet if we do not speedily recover that which we have lost, of the internal, spiritual power and purity of Worship, but persist in our spiritual Apostacy from it, whatever our pretended, professed zeal for visible and external purity of Worship may be, we shall let go, & lose all, pull down all, and bury our selves in our own ruines: *New-England* will be no more unto God, then any other people, *Jer. 9. 26. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab—* for all these Nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.

4. We must labour to recover our first holy Care and Watchfulness against all Will-worship, corrupt Worship, and Corruptions in Worship. Surely, it hath been heretofore, and almost hereunto, the Commendation of these Churches, that they have been sincerely, fervently, steadfastly zealous against all kinds and degrees of Will-worship. It was the Commendation of this Church of *Ephesus*, in her declining state, *Rev. 2. 2, 6—* how thou canst not bear them that are evil— Yet this thou hast— God grant that these Churches may never lose this part of their Commendation; that our Lord Jesus may never have occasion against us, to reprove us, and threaten us for our carelessness, negligence, sinful Convinance and Indulgence in this point, as he did the Church of *Pergamus*, *Rev. 2. 14.* and of *Thyatira*, ver. 20. —because thou sufferest— It may bewe are too secure, and not aware of any danger of corrupt Worship: let me say, The more need we have of this warning; for Will-worship doth ordinarily creep into Reformed Churches whilst they are asleep, gradually, secretly, and insensibly, and grow up unto a considerable and formidable height and strength, before it appears, and before Churches are aware: thus the Church of *Laod* was deeply corrupted with corrupt Worship, and knew it not, *Rev. 3. 17.* O these Churches in this declining, secure, lukewarm frame, are in great danger of it; let us therefore remember and receive the *Apollis* Exhortation, *Gal. 5. 1.* Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free,

free, and be not again intangled with the yoke of bondage.

1. *Let us take heed and beware of all dispositions and inclinations unto Will-worship.* Watch against the spirit of it: Corrupt Worship gets in first by the spirit and principles of it, and by the spiritual working of it in the heart of a people. It gets first into the heart; a people may uphold the pure Worship of God in the visible and external Form of it, with much seeming love and zeal, and yet their heart deeply corrupted with a spirit of Will-worship. When the heart of a people is gone from God and his Worship, it argues their heart is corrupted with a spirit of Will-worship, as in *Isa. 29. 13*— there is a whorish heart, *Ezek. 6. 9.* *They have broken me with their whorish heart*; there is a spirit of whoredome, *Hos. 4. 12.* How far the heart of New-England is corrupted with this spirit of Will-worship, with præ-dispositions and inclinations thereunto, would (we may fear) too soon and sadly appear, under a temptation thereunto.

2. *Let us watch against all the ways and workings of it*, even the secret, subtil, insensible insinuations and intrusions of it; against all the depths and devices of Satan, working by the darkest and deepest Counsels of Hell, to introduce Will-worship into Reformed Churches. We may think our selves secure from it, unless over-born by the overpowering violence of some external Temptation: but believe it, Satan hath divers and various Forms of Will-worship, suited and accommodated to the divers constitutions & conditions of Churches, and the diverse spirit and disposition of people that he hath to deal withall; he hath many Antichrists, *1 Joh. 2. 17.* there is a divers working of the spirit of Antichrist, *1 Joh. 4. 3.* This spirit worketh by the power of Satan, in a Mixture of Iniquity, *2 Thess. 2. 7.* And truly, we have had many Antichrists. It hath been alwayes Satans design, to introduce corrupt Worship into these Churches, under the most specious and spiritual Forms of it, by a direct contrary Extreme unto gross Ceremony and Superstition; the more cause we have to be very watchful, against all such wayes and workings of it.

3. *Let us watch against all Temptations unto corrupt Worship*, whether more secret, or more open. There are many Temptations thereunto: there is the Temptation of false Teachers, corrupting the Doctrine of Worship, and teaching of Will-worship, *Mat. 15. 9.* *Teaching for doctrynes the Commandments of men*: *Rev. 2. 20.* ---to teach, and to seduce. There is the Temptation of corrupt Communion, tempting Communion, *Col. 2. 18.* *Let no man beguile you, &c.* There is the Temptation of Division and Dissention, tending to drive dividing Parties into Extremes,

in those matters of Worship which they contend about, 1 Cor. 3. 4. 17. The Interest of a Party, it is a very great and strong Temptation: a Spirit of Division; (especially) when acting and working with a blinde, inordinate, preposterous, superstitious Zeal in matters of Worship, and when it is become *judicial and incurable*, never fails to bring in corrupt Worship at one door or another. It is the design of Satan, to bring in Will-worship in the smoke and smother of the fire of Contentions; Divisions do alwayes corrupt Churches. There is also the Temptation of an undue *Toleration*, which doth open a way to all the former, and lead into corrupt Compliances in wayes of corrupt Worship, Rev. 2. 20. There is also the Temptation of Persecution, and Tribulation--- O there are many Temptations unto corrupt Worship, and these Churches have not been without some of these Temptations therunto; such Temptations are likely to multiply upon us. O what cause have we then to be zealously and wakefully watchful, more especially against such Temptations which are instant, and most urgent and prevalent, and of which we do already begin to see and feel the sad and lamentable effects: and that considering there is such a *pre-disposition* in the very Spirit and Constitution of the Generation, to enter into this Temptation; and such a powerfull working of a Spirit of *Libertinisme*, to make way for, and lead into this Temptation; and also that men of corrupt Spirits, Principles and Practises, scandalous, corrupters, and broachers of corrupt Worship, open and professed Enemies unto pure Churches, Worship and Ordinances, are arisen unto so high a degree of bold Presumption among us, and that notwithstanding, they know that Publick Authority is by good and wholsome Laws, and so by Oath, and so by Conscience, and by divers obligations, both Civil and Sacred, engaged against them, I am no Casuist, in the great Case of *Toleration*, neither shall I undertake either to state, dispute, or decide that Question; what is in it self, or in divers respects or cases, at divers times and places, either Tolerable or Intolerable, in matters disputable: But this I take to be undeniable, That gross, bold, scandalous, presumptuous transgression of any one, or more, or all the Commandments of the *First Table*, perpetrated and persisted in with an high hand, notwithstanding *all due means of Conviction* used, and against clear light held forth, and manifestly under the Prevailing Power of a Spirit of Error, with malignity, in open opposition to the Truth, the true Churches, worship and ordinances of Christ: I say, I take it to be unquestionable, That such transgression it is *Intolerable*. Such I take to be the transgression of those who do grossly and scandalously profane any of the holy Ordinances of Christ.

Christ, in the Administration of them, presuming to offer strange fire: but much more of those who do both professedly and practically deny most, if not all Fundamentals, both of Faith and Order, and are known and acknowledged so to do by all the Reformed Churches in the world; who are in their wayes of corrupt worship no less the Synagogue of Satan, then those in Rev. 2.9. Now I say, if such Transgressors and Transgressions should (after the long labour and patience of these Churches, in a strong and stedfast encounter and conflict with this Temptation) at last prevail to break open a door unto corrupt worship, by Teaching, Seducing, Tempting and Enticing others unto corrupt Communion with them, according to the Doctrine of Balaam, to cast a stumbling block before the people of the Lord, as Rev. 2.14. I say, if this should come to pass, our case would be exceeding dangerous, especially this coming upon us in our declining and languishing state, when we have lost so much of our first life and love, that we have scarcely strength enough left, to reinforce our former Zeal and Courage in the Encounter; yea, and at such a time when the Generation is lamentably exposed, by the sins of the Times, (which are all tempting unto a Compliance with such a Temptation) and are (too much) without grace to resist it; and in a very unsettled state, as to their standing before God under his Covenant, even standing upon the dangerous Precipice of a gross Apostasy, the very opportunity for Satan to overthrow us by such a Temptation. Surely, if it be thus, or likely to be thus, then there is very great need of watchfulness against this Temptation. Neither let it be slighted, or accounted a light thing: for, such Profanations and Abominations, if indulged, will become the sins of the Land, and the guilt and Punishment of them will lye, and fall exceeding heavy upon the Land in a day of wrath: Or they will pull down wrath upon this Land, and upon this People; and the filth of them will pollute and defile the Land: it will be such Pollution as will not be purged away without fire; the guilt and filth of corrupt worship, is not purged away without the fire and the fornaite. And that which is most Perillous, it is the universal diffusion of the Corruption and Contagion of corrupt worship, by the subtle and insensible infusion and influence of a Spirit of *Libertinism*: a Spirit and Principle (it is) of all other, most dangerous and destructive unto Pure Churches, and will soon open a wide door unto all kinde of Abominations: for all false worships, (although they seem, in themselves, to be contrary Extremes) yet they all agree in this Principle of *Libertinism*, and will break in at that door. It will be in vain for us to hope for, or Promise our selves Security from gross Superstition and Ceremony, if we will leave open



open this door, or admit of a contrary Extreme in corrupt worship. And truly, if we should give way unto any kinde, it will be just with God, to give us up Judicially unto all kindes of corrupt worship. And let me adde, That a Spirit of *Libertinism*, if it prevail, will in the end bring in all kinde of Licentiousness and Profaneness: for it is a Womb, big with all kinde of Abominations: for, corruption in Worship, and corruption in Manners, do alwayes grow and go together. See at large *Ezek. 22. beginning*. Although *Libertinism* doth promise much Liberty, yet it bringeth into bondage to Corruption. *2 Pet. 2. 19.* It doth y<sup>e</sup> rather altogether unto bondage. O that these Churches, may recover their first Zeal against *Libertinism*, both the Spirit, Principle, and Practise of it: and so against all corrupt worship, which hath been the common destruction of Reformed Churches, and will most certainly be of these Churches, if it should break in upon us. O let us consider, we have been hither unto a People extraordinarily Privileged, with immunity from corrupt worship: we are yet free from any foreign or possible Temptation thereunto; we have yet all Advantages and Encouragements to withstand in, and to keep it out. If we admit of will-worship, we shall lose all the glorious work of Reformation which our Fathers laboured in, (which consisted chiefly in Separation from corrupt worship) we shall at once raze the Foundation, and ruine the Superstructure of these Churches, which in the very Constitution were set up; and stand in a way of opposition unto corrupt worship: such Churches will not, cannot bear any degree of corrupt worship. VVill-worship, it would even destroy our very Religion, and reduce this *VV*ilderness-people unto a kinde of Heathenism. O wo unto us, if we admit of will-worship, we shall soon fill up the measure of our sin, and prepare our selves for Judgement, even wrath to the utmost. O wo unto *New-England*, if ever God be provoked to revenge this quarrel of his Covenant upon us, according to that Threatning, *Lev. 26. 25.* If we admit of will-worship, *New-England* will become the Shame and scandal of Religion, and of all Reformed Churches, the Reproach of the Christian world, the Scorn and Triumph of *A*nathem, and in all respects & most sinful and miserable People. Thus we are to do our first work, in all things pertaining to the worship of God, *Labour unto the promotion and progress of the work of Reformation, by the just and faithful discharge of duty to the Children of the Covenant, multiplying and growing up under the Covenant in these Churches, under how great and general omission of duty towards them, we have cause seriously and justly to consider, and to lament.* Truly, it is much

# An Exhortation

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 so beset, that we shall no longer doubt and dispute the *Right* and *Rights* of such Children, and controvert, and neglect our duty towards them, until the holy Seed will be wholly corrupted, and the Purty, if not the Constitution of these Churches be greatly endangered, if not lost. It is sad to consider, how much many Churches are already corrupted, by the Licentiousness and Profaneness of many, if not most of the Children of the Covenant. Many, if not most, of the sons of Youth (which are many of them some of the most flagitious sins of the Times) are become the sins of Churches, and the guilt of them doth lye heavily upon Churches, with this heavy aggravation, that they are committed through the neglect of duty towards them, by the due exercise of *Discipline*. If yet there be any hope in *Israel* concerning this thing, (as it is spoken of, a very difficult Point of Reformation) *Ezek* 10:2. I say, if there be any hope of Reformation in this matter, it must be by a holy, religious, saving Education of the Children of the Covenant, and that both in Private and in Publick. Doubtless there is an extraordinary obligation upon Covenant-Parents, to train up their Children for God; and a great motive it is unto all care, labour and diligence, unto such Religious Family Education, for such Parents to consider, that their Children are Children of the Covenant, and in this sense Gods Children, as *Isa* 16:20, 21; and the Children of the Promise, *Acts* 2:39; and to consider a special Promise of saving grace and blessing: on the other hand, it is a very sad and lamentable consideration, unto any Religious Parent, to consider, that his Children should (through his neglect of Education) be instrumental, by their Profaneness and wickedness, to pollute and defile the Church of God. O if ever you would do any thing for the recovery, and propagation of these Churches, labour herein. The corruption of Churches doth begin in Families, and if there be no hope of Family Reformation, there is no hope of Church Reformation. It is indeed sad to consider, how many Families are already grown incorrigible and incurable. Labour to imitate *Isaiah* 54:13, 14. But that which I chiefly intend, in this Particular, is Publick Education, for I may so call it. Surely Churches owe much duty unto the Children of the Covenant, commonly styled *the Children of the Church*; they are doubtless the Subject of the special care and industry of the *Pastors*, to be watched over, warned, instructed, admonished, both Privately and Publickly, *Churches*; and are to own them, and acknowledge them, visibly, as they do gradually grow up unto maturity and capacity unto Church-watch and Priviledges. If they be in any wise under the Covenant, and so of the visible Kingdom of Christ; they must

must needs be under his Rule and Government, which is no way rightly administered, but by the regular exercise of Discipline in Instituted Churches. O they have been very unhappy Controversies to these Churches, whereby the vigorous exercise of Discipline unto these, hath been so long demurred and delayed, that very many of them are grown up unto such an height and strength in Profaneness, that they have even broken, and cast off the Yoke of Christ's Government in his Church, and are grown incorrigible and incurable by Discipline. And truly, this neglect is grown to great and general failure in some Churches, that there is very little hope of the recovery of the vigorous effect and exercise of Discipline toward them. So that the current of the corruption of the Generation is likely to break in like a flood upon the Churches at this breach, and in short time to carry all before it. It is one of the most fatal signs which is upon these Churches, that this one evil is likely to prove both ruining and remediless, and is the more sadly signal, because we are no more sensible of it, and no more concerned by our Prayers and Endeavours to Reform it. Let us say, The Progress of the Covenant, the Propagation of Churches, the Preservation of Churches under their deepest desolation, in their lowest condition, is must be by the succession of an holy Seed. *Isa. 6. 3. So the holy Seed shall be the substance thereof.* If we neglect them, either Doctrinally or Practically, by the general and total neglect of them, and our duty toward them, we do thereby lay the foundation of the Apostacy both of these Churches, and of the whole Generation.

5. Labour unto the promotion and progress of the work of Reformation, by a full, faithful, and religious improvement of your Christian Liberty. There is a Spirit and Principle of Liberty in the hearts of all sincere Christians, whom Christ hath made free indeed. *Joh. 8. 36. Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.* *2 Cor. 3. 17.* There is a very large and necessary use and exercise of this Spirit and Principle of Liberty, in our whole Christian Conversation, especially in all our religious converse with God and men; *Gal. 5. 13. For Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty.* Our Christian Liberty is regulated most exactly and strictly, by Rules and Precepts in the Word of God: there is a complete directory for the exercise of our Christian Liberty in the Word of God, which is the perfect Law of liberty, *Jam. 1. 25.* Our habitual conformity to this Law of Liberty, is the chief Principle of Liberty; and our Practical Subjection to the Law of Liberty, is the chief Practice or Exercise of our Liberty. This Liberty is alwayes acted under the Power and Authority of Divine Truth, *Joh. 8. 22. Ye shall know the truth, and the*

truth shall make you free, Jam: 2: 12. *Be ye free, and yet stand fast by the law of liberty.* This Christian Liberty doth not give men leave to believe Privileges and Practices what they will, (as Libertines do vainly suppose), and from thence plead for a *Libertine Liberty*, of Conscience, and a boundless *Liberty* both of Profession and Practice in matters of Religion. True Christian Liberty holdeth Conscience fast bound to the Rule: where are Privileges and Immunities, commonly called Christian Liberties, in and about which our Christian Liberty is to be exercised, as the proper Subject of this Liberty. Thus we must hold, keep, and stand fast in, Gal: 5: 19. *Stand fast in the liberty, whereunto Christ hath made you free.* And we must be careful to exercise our Christian Liberty in a way of Gospel-order. Liberty and Order are inseparable, in the conversation of a Christian: it is the Liberty of Order, our Liberty is laid out, and limited by Order: those therefore that do plead for Liberty, unto the subversion of Order, are Libertines, and dangerous Enemies unto Liberty. We must also exercise and improve our Christian Liberty in a way of full subjection unto the Power, Rule and Government of Christ Ministerially exercised in his Church, in the Administration of all his ordinances, as the free Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom. Those who rise up in a way of opposition unto, or rebellion against the Power of Christ regularly exercised in his Church, under pretence of the defence of their Liberty, are no true friends to true Liberty. We must also improve and exercise our Liberty in way of Love, Peace, Union, and Communion, unto mutual edification and comfort: *By love serving one another.* Gal: 5: 13. O this is the only sweet and comfortable life of Christian Liberty. It is a very sinful, shameful abuse of Christian Liberty, to make it an *excuse for the flesh*, to make it subservient to Libertinism, to licentiousness, to carnal Reason and Policy, to worldly Designs and Ends, to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of men, in fomenting Divisions & Contentions, and of making it a *cloak of maliciousness*, 1 Pet. 2: 16 — Surely it is a great part of our work of Reformation, to Reform these Abuses of our Christian Liberty. We are People highly Priviledged with Christian Liberty, and advantaged to the exercise of it. O that we better understood it, and improved it! Let us alwayes remember to keep our Liberty wholly subservient unto our Religion, and not set up Liberty above Religion; if so, we shall lose both our Religion and our Liberty together.

106. Labour unto the promotion and progress of the work of Reformation, by recovery of your first Love, Peace and Union. O the loss of our first Love, Peace and Union, hath hitherto been an irreparable loss, an incurable

edrabie wound, concerning which we may take up our lamentation, and say, Jer. 8: 20, 21, 22: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not healed: for the hurt of my people, I am hurt; I am black: astonishment hath taken hold upon me. Is there no Balm in Gilead? is there no Physician there? why then is not the hurt of the daughter of my people recovered? O are our Divisions become judicial, and so incurable? If so, our state is truly lamentable, as Jer. 26: 18. Thus saith the Lord, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament, nor bemoan them; for I have taken away my plague from this people, saith the Lord, even loving kindness and mercies. If it should be so, well might the hearts and hopes of all our faithful Leaders fail, whose labours have hitherto much failed. Surely then the recovery of our first Love, Peace and Union, is a chief part of the work of Reformation, and will be found a very hard and difficult part of the work. In order hereunto,*

*we must remember from whence we are fallen. O let the remembrance of the sweetness and blessedness of our first Love, Peace and Union, convince and humble us under the sin of our Envyings, Strifes, Debates, Divisions, Contentions and Emulations, &c. It was the sad state of the Church of Corinth, that although they were lamentably distressed and distracted with Divisions, yet they were not sensible of the sin of them, but were puffed up, and did glory one against another. O that it were nothing so with us! truly, so long as it is so, there will be no hope of healing. O that we were convinced of the sin of our Division, and the multitude of sins that are begotten by it, that we might mourn penitentially, and bemoan our selves before God with brokenness of heart, and earnestly beseech him to pardon, and to purge away all that sin, and to grant us reforming grace. Truly, until we are thus convinced and humbled, there will be no Reformation.*

2. We must labour to recover our first Spirit of Love, Peace, and Union; pray earnestly unto God, to pour his Spirit upon us, a Spirit of Love, to pour out abundance of the grace of Love; to create Love, Peace and Union for us; and to take away the Spirit of Division, which we are so deeply corrupted withall.

3. We must labour to recover our first New-England Interest; that is, that Interest upon which this People, and these Churches were first founded, as to their Religious Constitution, which is God and Religion: this is the onely uniting Interest, our very hearts and Souls will cleave and unite most intirely, in Love, with Peace and Union, in our God and our Religion; this Interest will make a people of one heart, and of one Soul, Jer. 32. 39. — *They shall be my people, and I will be their God, and*



*I will give them one heart and one way, as I have said.* Observe, when a people do cleave close to God and his Covenant; and so unto Religion; they have *one heart and one way*, that is, sweet and perfect Unity and Amity. O this is our great mischief and misery, and the very original of our defection, that we have much forsaken our proper *New-England Interest*; we have committed these two great evils, *Jer. 2. 13. Forsake you God, and burn our Cisterns.* We have been changing of our main Fundamental Interest; we have been deserting our own *Religious Interest*, & espousing another, (*viz.*) a *worldly Interest*; we are turning from God, after the World; the World is becoming the main Interest of *N.E.* and we are becoming a worldly people; a people of a worldly Spirit, Principles & Practices. I do not mean only, nor so much, in seeking and prosecuting the things of the World, (although that be enough to denominate us notoriously Worldly) but our turning our very Religion it self into a *Worldly Interest*; by making of it the subject of Carnal Confidences, resting, trusting, and boasting in it, and also by making of it the subject of Carnal Contentions, and so setting Religion against it self, and the Professors of it one against another; and so making of it subservient unto worldly designs, yea unto worldly lusts; and thereby making it, in our Profession and Practice of it, a mere *Worldly Religion*; yea, too many do too much make their professed Confidence in God himself, a *Worldly Interest* & subservient to their worldly lusts, as they *Act. 3. 11. Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord in the midst of us? how will we contravene him.* When a worldly Spirit, worldly Principles, worldly Wisdom and Counsels, do sway and preponderate in all matters, both Civil and Religious; then a people are fully and thoroughly reled upon a *Worldly Interest*; and are truly become a *Worldly people*. And then comes all kinde of Dissentions, Contentions, Emulations, Strifes, Debate, &c. for the World is alwayes a dividing Interest, and all our Divisions are carnal and worldly; *1 Cor. 3. 3. I am. 4. 3.* Whatever pretences of a Religious Zeal, the Fomentors of Division may make, it is a *Worldly Spirit* that fomentes all Divisions; and it is utterly impossible, that ever a worldly spirited people should unite upon sube grounds of Union, or that any people should ever unite at all in a worldly Interest. And therefore if we can relinquish our worldly Interest, and retrieve our own onely true and proper Interest, which is *our God and Religion*; let and settle our hearts again upon *God and Religion*; this would heal all our Divisions, and reform all. As a *change of Interest* hath been the great Cause of our general defection; so a *change of Interest* again, would consummate our Reformation. It is the Prescription which God gives

gives unto that Backsliding people for their treachery, Hos. 3. 4. 2. 3. 4. *Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, &c. As thus shall we save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands; for we are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.*

I shall take leave (now in the Conclusion) to propose this general Exhortation unto Reformation, more particularly, unto those who are especially concerned as Reformers.

I. I crave leave to Apply my self (yet with humility and sincerity (as it becometh me, (speaking in the Name and fear of God) unto those, who are, or who shall be Established, or Re-established (this day) in Place of Rule and Government among us, as our *Magistracy*. Much Honoured, that which I have humbly to offer unto You in the Name of the Lord, and on the behalf of this People, is this plain (yet great word) of Exhortation. Whereby I do most humbly beseech you, to labour in your Place, by the utmost and most faithful improvement of your Power, Interest, Wisdom, Grace, and Spirit of Government which you have received from the Lord, to promote this great Work of *Reformation*, in all the Parts, and in all the Degrees of it. This Government, and so this Magistracy, it was through the most wise and merciful Providence of God, continued unto a more direct suberviency unto the Work of *Reformation*, as the great and main design of it, in the intentions both of God, and of all his faithful People. Therefore God Spirited our first *Magistracy* unto this Work of *Reformation*, and prospered that glorious Work unto a very happy progress, under their Civil Conduct of this Religious and Reforming people. And now the Place, the Power, the whole Recruitment of this *Reforming Magistracy*, it is by our Annual Election, and so by a Providential Succession, devolving upon You, and remaineth vested in You. Therefore our eyes, our hearts, our hopes, are (under God, and as to man) much upon You as our Reformers. It is our great hope, and will be our great rejoicing, to see the *Reformation* still in the hand of *Truth*, with those *Seven* to see a powerful and prosperous progress of the Work of *Reformation*, under your hand, labouring therein with a full concurrence of Divine Assistance. True it is, there are great Mountains standing before you, but this is the Word of the Lord unto you, *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit*, if the Lord Spirit you unto the Work, they shall become Plain, and although the work be much declined, it shall be again revived, and the *Thyings* thereof shall be brought forth with *Songs* and Acclamations of Grace, unto the glory of God. It

hath

hath been a great (if not the greatest) Honour, which God hath put upon Civil Magistracy, and that which addeth true Glory unto its Greatness, That he hath made Civil Magistrates, *Reformers*. Seldome hath there been any great Work of Reformation wrought, either in the Church of old, or in the succeeding Ages of it, but God hath made Kings, Princes, and Civil Magistrates, his Ministers in it. And alwayes, in the most flourishing state of the Kingdome of Christ, he hath caused the Mountains to bring peace, and the little hills to bring sweetness. The Church on earth will be in the height and top of its prosperity, when the Mountain of the Lords House shall be exalted in the tops of the Mountains; when Kings shall be her Nursing-fathers, and Queens her Nursing-mothers. You have the most encouraging Examples of the most illustrious Reformers before you: You know this people, their present spirit, state and way; You have been with us at *Masada*, at *Menahem*, and at *Kibbuth-hastanah*, where we have both tempted God, and tryed you. You may well say of us, as *Moses* did of them, *I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck*; and so you may by a solemn Confession, call Heaven and Earth to record against us, as he did sometime against them. You are to labour with a very incorrigible, rebellious, backsliding generation, under an extraordinary juncture of Provocations and Temptations, Difficulties and Dangers. O so much the more I am emboldered in the Name of the Lord, with an humble importunity, to beseech your Care, Constancy, Courage and Faithfulness in this your great Duty, lest the Ruine of this Self-destroying people, should be found under your hand. It will be your Glory, not onely to be Reformers, but Repairers and Restorers, to Repair the Breach, and to raise up Foundations for many Generations. Such as You are in Scripture called not onely Gods, but Saviours; and Saviours, raised up upon Mount Zion: we stile you so with Modesty and Sobriety, in Scripture phrase and sense, as still remembering that you must die like men. But hereby we understand that you are concerned in & entrusted with somewhat that is Sacred; you cannot approve your selves to be Gods more, then by the Patronage of Religion; you cannot approve your selves to be Saviours more, then by being Reformers, Reformation will be our Salvation. We are to chuse you this day for God: and so doing, we may hope that God will in mercy chuse you for us. You being so Chosen, both by God, and his people, are under a double, and so indispensable Obligation, even by your Election, to be for God, and for his people; that is, for the promotion and preservation of that which is the main Interest of God and his people here, which is Religion. You are to Rule not onely over *Men*, but *Christians*; not onely

only over People, but the People of God: therefore you are to Rule, as in the fear of God, so in a more peculiar manner from God, and for God, that God may Rule by you, that you may be the Ministers of God for our good. God hath set you as our Hedge, and as our wall, whereby he hath enclosed this his Vineyard, and all his precious and pleasant things with us; he hath set you as a part of the Defence upon the Glory, God doth therefore expect, that you should fully Assert and Exert all that Power which he hath committed to you, to be improved for the publick Weal of his people, especially in and about matters of Religion, which is the greatest concernment of our publick Weal. Courage and Faithfulness therein, is the peculiar Excellency of a Christian Magistracy, the regular exercise thereof, will be the Strength and Glory of your Government, and the Stability and Prosperity of this people under it. It is your Concernment to uphold this Government, in the full and whole interest and influence of it, unto all the Ends of it, especially this great and main End of it, the Preservation and Propagation of Religion. It will be your Commendation, which was holy Davids, as he was eminently a Type of Christ in the Work of Reformation, that the Zeal of Gods house had consumed him. The hearts of the sober, faithful, peaceable, and religious people of the Land, are towards the Governours of Israel, who offer themselves willingly to the help of the Lord in the Work of Reformation, in this time of general defection. And surely, this is the greatest Trueth that we repose in you, and therefore the highest hope, expectation, confidence and dependance that we place upon you, as our Rulers, Governours, Leaders, Publick Benefactors and Fathers, That you will by the utmost improvement of your Power and Interest, advance and establish the true, pure, and holy Worship of God, (and so far as is concerneth you) not suffer these Churches, no not this People, to be corrupted, no not this Land, to be polluted and defiled with Will-worship. A Religious Reforming Magistracy, hath hitherto been our Crowning Mercy: if God set You over us in mercy; he will make you such a Magistracy. And therefore our Prayers for you shall ever be, That he that is the Light of Israel, will be a Light unto you, that you may be as the Light of Israel unto us. And that you may be abundantly influenced with a Spirit of Government, from Him whose all Government is; that you may receive a large portion of that Spirit, which resteth upon Him, even a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, a Spirit of Counsel and of Might, a Spirit of Knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; that you may be of a quick understanding in his fear: And that in your measure also, Righteousness may be the girdle of your loins, and Faithfulness the girdle

*girdle of your reins, that so you may feed and lead this people, both in the skillfulness of your hand, and the integrity of your hearts. We also shall pray, That you may be kept, and carried above all the Temptations and Provocations of our Murmurings, Dissentions, and Rebellions; that God may never be angry with you for our sakes, and that it may never go ill with you for our sakes: as also above all your own frailties and infirmities; that God may never be provoked by our sins, to suffer you to fall, as once he did holy David, that he might punish Israel. We wish you all the blessings which those who are just, ruling in the fear of God, may expect; that we might behold you as the Lights of the Morning, when the Sun riseth, a Morning without Clouds; that the Anniversary Revolution of this Government by our Annual Election, may be unto us as the rising Sun, by which we may receive Influences of Divine Blessing, which may cause us to grow up as the tender grass, by the clear shining after rain; that in your days the righteous may flourish, and abundance of peace; that we may enjoy Prosperity and Tranquility under this Magistracy, and that there may be a peaceful and prosperous Succession of it from Generation to Generation; that God continuing unto us our Judges as at the first, and our Counsellors as at the beginning, we may remain to be a City of Righteousness, and a faithful City.*

II. I shall take leave to propose this Exhortation unto the Ministry of these Churches, nextly concerned, as Publick Reformers, in the Work of Reformation. It is proposed in the Text, directly, *To the Angel of the Church of Ephesus.* The Angels of the Churches are particularly directed unto, and charged with this Work, in the several Churches. The first Ministry of these Churches, it was eminently a Reforming Ministry, extraordinarily qualified unto, and improved in, the Work of Reformation: God made them great Reformers, and wrought a great Work of Reformation by them; and they lived faithfully labouring in that Work unto the death, though not without some discouragement, and some diminution of their joy and comfort, from a pre-apprehension, yea from some present appearance of the sad signs of the defection of these Churches, before their departure. That Ministry, those Ministers, they are generally departed; (some few (here and there one, onely) of that Ancient Old England Ministry, remaining with us, as the Crown and Ornament of our New-England-Presbytery.) And truly, the remembrance of the departure of that Ministry, with the signal Circumstances, and sad Consequences thereof, may justly move lamentation; they being divers of them carried away (as it were) in Chariots of fire: I mean, by an Anticipation of their translation, in the ordinary course



course of Nature, and when in the strength and travail of their Ministerial Labours, for these Churches, and with this Generation; bearing a full clear Testimony unto the great duties, and against the great sins of the Times, and standing in the Gap before God, to turn away impending Judgements. Their Praise is yet fresh and flourishing in these Churches, being legible in *living Epistles of Commendation, written not with Ink, but by the Spirit of the living God.* They have a living Memory, and a lasting Monument in every godly heart, who hath experienced the converting, quickning, comforting presence and power of the Spirit in their Ministration. They are departed, and we have wept over their *fares with that Lamentation, My father, my father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.* The Burthen of the Work of the Ministry, and so of this great Work of Reformation in these Churches, it now resteth upon you, who are the present standing Ministry, this *New-England Ministry*, which is Coevall and Coetaneous with this *New-England Generation*; Amongst whom, I am not worthy to be mentioned as one (though with the utmost expression of diminution, as less then the least of those whom God hath called forth to take a part of this Ministry) and therefore most unmeet and unworthy thus to speak unto you: yet I am bold to beseech you to hear this Exhortation from the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Name I speak, and say, *O Labour to be a Reforming Ministry.* Although there hath been a change of Ministers in most of the Churches, yet we hope there is not a change of the Ministry, but that the same Ministry is still remaining; that is, a Ministry of the same Constitution, Spirit, Principles, Minde, Judgement and Practice, in all things pertaining to the Work of the Ministry in these Churches; a Ministry, which hath received not onely *the Mantle*, but a portion of *the Spirit of Elijah.* And therefore, you are engaged to undertake, to uphold, and to carry on the same Work of Reformation, in all the parts of it, and to labour unto the progress of it, in the Spirit and Power of it, so far as you are concerned, respecting either Doctrine, Profession or Practice. More especially, God expecteth that you should promote the Work of Reformation, in your several Churches and Congregations, by the regular and thorough exercise of the Power of Christ (committed unto you) in the Administration of Doctrine and Worship, which is the great Trust and Charge committed unto you to keep, 1 Tim. 6. 20. This is *the Rod of his strength out of Zion*, whereby his people are made a *milking people in the day of his power*, Psal. 110. 2, 3. Exalt Christ, by the due exercise of his Power in his Name, that Christ may reign Ministerially in these Churches. The Rule and Government

of Christ powerfully Administred, would soon Reformat all. O that Discipline might be restored, unto the full and effectual exercise of it, in the Spirit and Power of it, unto all the saving Ends of it, in these Churches! it would work a great Reformation. And O that this poor Generation, which is committed Chiefly to the Charge of this Ministry, may be generally cared for in all the Churches. They are the Generation, which you are called to labour with and for, amongst whom you hope to have the fruit of your Labours in the Work of the Ministry, and whom you are to stand in Judgement with, and to give an account of, in the day of Account. O what Account will be given of them, if many, or the generality of them, should perish, under the neglect of the due exercise of the Ministerial Power of Christ towards them, in any of the Churches? Most of all the Work of Reformation, dependeth upon the faithful and successful Labours of this Ministry, in the work of Conversion; the travail of your Souls in that work, your travelling with Souls in that work of Conversion. Here lyes the stress, and the life and spirit of the Work of Reformation; without which, all Effayes, Endeavours, and Labour therein, and thereunto, will be utterly vain and void. If God make this Ministry a *Converting Ministry*, the Work of Reformation will be again revived; but if God suffer it to be a *Judicial Ministry*, a Ministry sent in Judgement, to make the hearts of this people fat — then there will be no hope, the Generation will grow sick at heart, under *Spiritual Plagues and Judgements*, under a *savour of death*, by this Ministry, and so die in their sins. *A Judicial Ministry hath always been the fatal Cause of the final Ruine of such a people*, as *Isa. 6. 10. Mat. 13. 13, 14. Job. 12. 40. Rom. 9. 32.* And therefore, how are all such, who have the Charge of Souls in such a dangerous time, amongst a declining people, concerned to Labour, to Pray, to Preach, to be instant in season, out of season, in private, in publick, to spend their Souls, to bend the strength of their Ministerial Labours, unto the Conversion of Souls? How did the Prophets of old labour, in like case, with a declining people, and dolefully lament the loss of their labour, so *Isaiah, Isa. 49. 4. Jeremiah, Jer. 6. 10.* yea, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, *Mat. 23. 37.* O *Jerusalem*, — how often would I have gathered thy Children — Truly, it is a most doleful discouragement to the present Ministry, in many Congregations, to see so many Souls sitting, hearts hardning, immortal Souls dying and perishing under their hand, Care and Charge; but yet they must labour, and Agonize in Prayer unto God, for a dispensation of Converting grace by their Ministry, that the Work of Conversion, and so the Work of Reformation, may be revived: for

if not, it is much to be feared, that the Sun will quickly go down over the Prophets: I allude unto *Mic. 3. 6.*--- I mean, that our day of grace will expire, and the Sun set upon these Churches, by the departure of the Ministry, and so our house be left unto us desolate, as *Mat. 23. 38, 39.* The Prosperity of these Churches, dependeth much upon the success of the Labours of this present Ministry: and therefore, the hopes, desires, and prayers of all the faithful people of God in these Churches are, That you may alwayes remain as Stars in the right hand of *Iesus Christ*, fixed in your Orb, full of Light, Regular in all your Motions, Powerfull in all your Influences, shining in all your Appearances, with the Splendor and Lustre of his Spirit and Grace, in whose hand you are: And that there may be no such wandering Stars, spoken of *Jude 13.* whose Erratick Motions should disturb the Celestial Order and Harmony of our Ecclesiastical Heaven.

III. I propose this Exhortation also unto All the People of the Land, who are present; and O that whole New-England might be moved with this word of Exhortation, --- *Repent, and do the first works.* O that the heart of this people might be moved, as the heart of one man, unto the Work of Reformation. It is a general Work, our deflection it is general, and therefore our Reformation it must be also general. Of old, the Work of Reformation it was alwayes wrought by all the people, as you may reade *2 Kings 23. 3.* *2 Chron. 29. 36.* & *34. 30.* the Text saith there, *All, small and great:* So *Ezra 10. 9.* *Neh. 8. 1.* --- *All the the people as one man;* every one that is able to do anything, must bear his part in the Work of Reformation. Every one hath a particular work of Reformation, in and for himself, to Reform himself, his own heart, and his own life; if every one could Reform one, it would be a great and general Reformation. Every one, that hath a Soul to save, or hath any care of his Salvation, is concerned in this Work of Reformation, of what degree, rank or order whatsoever; every one must labour, in his own person, in his proper place, by the utmost improvement of his power, interest and influence, to help forward the work; every one must set his hand and heart unto the Work of Reformation, in Families, Towns, Churches, throughout the Country. The Work of Reformation, it must run through all our hearts and ways, in every Station and Relation, in every Calling and Employment, through all matters both Civil and Religious, in all our converse with God and man. There is not one here present in the Congregation, but is concerned in this Work of Reformation.

I. Let every one be admonished and warned to take heed of hindring the

*Work of Reformation.* They are the most dangerous and desperate Enemies unto *New-England*, and unto these Churches, who do hinder Reformation; so do all Profane persons, by their sins of Profaneness, whose work it is more and more to corrupt the Generation, and to fill, and pollute the Land with their Abominations. So also do all Worldly and Self-seeking persons, by sinking the Interest of Religion, and raising a Worldly Interest, and so building up their own Self-interests upon the ruines of the Publick. So also do all Factionous, Seditious, and Contentious persons, who make it their design and work to foment Divisions, and to uphold dividing Parties and Interests, unto the shaking of very Foundations. So also do all corrupt Worshippers, and corrupters of the Worship of God. In a word, so do all Carnal, Formal, Hypocritical Professors. And so do all the Capital-leading sinners of the Times, and of the Generation. These are all publick Enemies unto these Churches: more dangerous and destructive Enemies unto this great Work of the Lord, then *Sabbath* and *Tobiah*, and the rest of old, were unto the Building of the City or the Temple. *Who to those by whom Offences come, who are Leaders in our great and general Delection, and hinderers of the Work of Reformation, let us say such who turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.* *Psal. 125. 5.*

2. *Let all the Friends, Lovers, Well-wishers, Well-willers unto the Publick Good and Prosperity of these Churches, up and be doing in the Work of Reformation.* You who are of the passing generation, of the first undertakers of this Work of Reformation, surviving, and who have seen with your eyes, and felt in what works God did in your dayes, as *Psal. 44. 1.* who have therefore yet a living remembrance of the gracious Wayes, and glorious Works of God to his people, in the first beginnings, and prosperous progress of the Work of Reformation; and so of the House of God, of the Churches here in their first glory,  *Hag. 2. 3.* You have also seen and observed, the gradual declension and desertion of these Churches; and therefore you cannot chuse but be most sadly and sorrowfully sensible of our present necessity of Reformation. O then be moved to do what in you lieth, by your Faith, Prayer, Life and Example, to revive the Work of Reformation again before you die. You also who are the present standing Generation, the next and immediate Successors unto those first Reformers, who have been actually entrusted with Church-Order, Ordinances, and Administrations; with the whole Cause of God, Kingdome of Christ, and Interest of Religion, and so with this great and glorious Work of Reformation, and who are likely to be found

most

most guilty of this general defection, and have too much already endangered the loss of all; O be you moved to stand up strongly unto the work under that Charge, and all those solemn Obligations and Engagements which God hath laid upon you, the weight and burthen of the Work lyeth upon you: we have been raised up *in the stead of our Fathers*, as *Jos. 5.7.* to carry on this Work. And truly, if we should desert, or be slight and negligent therein, it will soon fall to the ground, and sink past recovery; and we shall thereby, at once, cut off the hope of our Fathers, and lay the Foundation of the Ruine of *Succeeding Generations*, utterly *undo* all Posterity. O let us therefore make it our Prayer, which is in *1 Kings 8.57,58.* *The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers; let him not leave us, nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in his wayes, &c.* And you who are of the Rising Generation, Adult Youth, and Young men, You are many of you, if not most of you a *Third Generation*, from those whom God first brought out into this Wilderness; You are they who are likely to out-live *Josua*, and all the *Elders of Israel that out-lived Josua*— and all that Generation, as it is said of them, *Judg. 2.7,8,9.* You cannot (many of you) remember the works which God wrought for your forefathers—You have never seen these Churches in their first Beauty and Glory, nor the Worship and Ordinances of God in their first Spiritual Power and Purity: It hath been, so far, your unhappiness, that you have been brought forth, and lived under the decaying State of these Churches, and of Religion; and therefore are like to grow up under the prevailing power of a Spirit of Apostacy. And alas! upon you is likely to fall all the Calamity and Misery of this Apostacy which is begun, you will see and feel the sad and lamentable Effects of it. O therefore that Youth and Young persons, could lay this Consideration unto their hearts, and be moved also, to engage in this Work of Reformation, before it be too late, by labouring unto a sound Conversion, and a religious Conversation, in the dayes of their Youth. O that All thus concerned would *Up and be doing!*— True it is, there are many great discouragements, so that the hearts of those who are most, and best disposed unto the Work, are ready to fail; especially considering, that all means of Reformation have hitherunto failed, nothing hath hitherunto done us any good: So that God himself may justly complain of us, as he did of that people, *Hos. 6.4.* *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? &c. Jer. 6.29.*— the bellows are burnt:— Truly Reformation, it is likely to prove a very hard and heavy Work, yet we must never despair of Reformation, as that people seemed to do, *Ezek. 33.10.* *If our transgressions and our iniquities be upon us, and*



*we pine away in them, how then should we live? (q.d.)* You call us to Repentance, and Reformation, and denounce Wrath and Judgement against us, if we do not do it: but alas, to what purpose? for God is resolved to suffer us to pine and die away in our sins: And therefore God doth instantly give them an encouraging call to Repentance and Reformation, *Ver. 11. Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn-- and live: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Surely, God is yet calling of us unto Reformation, and waiting upon us for Reformation. It is yet a Probation-time with us, wherein we are standing before God upon our Tryal; God hath repented once more of the evil, as Amos 7.3. the unprofitable Tree hath one year more to stand in the Vineyard, Luk. 13.8. Yet truly, now God seemeth to be limiting of us to a certain day, Psal. 95.7-- To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. O let us take heed then unto this day, this limited day, which will put a period unto Gods patience and long-suffering, lest God swear suddenly, and irrevocably, in his wrath, against us: if once our day be past, it will be indeed too late, witness our Saviours mournful, doleful Lamentation, which he wept out over Jerusalem, Luke 19.42. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things of thy peace: but now they are hid-den from thine eyes. And why? see *ver. 44. Because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation*, therefore I say now, now, it is high time to re-form. It is pressed as a present, as an instant duty, *Zeph. 2.2, 3. Before-- before-- before-- before*; that is, in all haste, speedily. *Hos. 10.12. It is time to seek the Lord*; (that is) it is high time, more then time, the on-ly time; now if ever, now or never. I do now re-inforce the Exhor-tation, at least by way of allusion to it in *Hag. 2.4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and be strong, O Joshua, the son of Josedech the high Priest, and be strong all ye people of the Land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts, according to the word that I Cove-nanted with you, when you came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth a-mong you, fear ye not. So let Magistracy, Ministry and People be strength-ned, and encouraged to this Work, believing and hoping that Gods Spi-rit remaineth among us, according to the Covenant which he made with his people, when he brought them forth first into this Wilderness. Now we must set to the Work,**

*I. With one heart.* No hope of Reformation without Union. Division hath been one great cause of our defection, and will be a total obstru-ction unto Reformation, if it continue, we must unite our hearts, our hands, our strength. O if ever we would unite, let it be in, and unto the Work of Reformation.

2. Set

2. Set unto it with all your hearts, and with all your souls. Our very hearts and souls must be engaged unto it, and in it, we must set to it in good earnest; as unto a work that must be done; we are now brought unto this Dilemma, either a timely, speedy, thorough Reformation, or else there will be a general and total defection; either, Repent, and do the first works, or otherwise I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candlestick out of its place, unless thou repent, is the voice of Christ unto these Churches. O that we understood, and seriously and solemnly considered, that we are a lost and undone people without Reformation; that we are a helpless, hopeless people without Reformation; that nothing will recover us from our defection, and prevent our destruction by the execution of impending Judgements, but only Reformation. O then, we should stand trembling before God, under the apprehension of the instant, urgent necessity of Reformation, as *Exa. 18. 9.* And all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter. *ver. 12.* Then all the Congregation answered, and said, with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do. Observe, they cried out, passionately, affectionately, So must we do; (q. d.) we are a lost, undone people, there is no hope, no help for us without Reformation; and then they set to the Work in good earnest. O that we could make Reformation our main work and business, without delay.

3. We must set to it with a right and full understanding of the whole work of Reformation, in all parts and progress of it. We have been ready to return (by way of retraction) unto this great Exhortation, as that people, *Ad. 13. 7.* Even from the dayes of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine Ordinances, and have not kept them: Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord; but ye said, wherein shall we return? So *8. 13.* Though they were guilty of a very great and general defection, yet they understood not the Work of Reformation. Truly so it is our great unhappiness, that we do not better know wherein the Work of Reformation consisteth; yea, that some of the great things of our peace do seem to be even Judicially, or in Judgement, hidden from our eyes, *Luk. 19. 42.* Dem. *19. 4.* Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day; and that was the reason that their defection was continued. *Psa. 95. 10.* Forty years long was I grieved with this Generation; and said, It is a people that do erre in their hearts, and they have not known my wayes: Unto whom I swear, &c. They were incurable in their defection, because they understood not the Work of Reformation. It is observable, in all these seven Epistles unto the Churches, Christ calls for an understanding attention, Let him that



Reform, renouncing all our own carnal Confidences, and disclaiming our own wisesdomes and wills, wherein we have too long laboured in vain; trust our own Hearts no further, no longer, which have so much, & so often deceived us, but bemoan our selves before God, as a hopeles and helples people, as Ephraim did, *Jer.* 31. 18. and the Church, *Jer.* 3. 22, 23. — Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for, from the hills, or from the multitude of mountains, — for shame hath devoured the labours of our hands from our youth. — We lie down in our shame, and confusion covereth us — then God will work for us, *Deut.* 32. 36. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none about us or left. So *Jer.* 30. 15, 17. Why criest thou for thing affliction? thy sorrow is incurable — for I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thee of thy wounds. — We must therefore make our Prayer to God, Turn thou up, and we shall be turned, *Jer.* 31. 18. Heal thou us, and we shall be healed, *Jer.* 17. 14.

7. we must labour in this work by Faith. Those who will be (at least) Publick Reformers, must have a mighty power of Faith, *2 Chron.* 15. 8. He took courage, and put away the abominable Idols. There must be the confidence of Faith, *Isa.* 38. 13. In returning and in rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. There must be the dependance of Faith, *Hos.* 6. 1, 2, 3. Come, let us return unto the Lord — he will heal us — he will binde us up — he will revive us — he will raise us up, and we shall live in his hands. There must be the hope and expectation of Faith, *Isa.* 26. 8. — in the way of thy judgements have we waited for thee — *Ver.* 12. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. There must be the strong and powerful intercessions of Faith, *Isa.* 62. 6, 7. He hath set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem — Ye that make mention of the Name of the Lord, give him no rest until he establish, and make Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth. There must be the wrestlings of Faith, whereby we may take hold upon God, and not let him go, but hold him by Faith, as a God in Covenant with us, as a God All-sufficienc unto us, as a God who hath engaged himself unto us by his Covenant, and by all his Promises, to pardon us, to purge us, to convert us, to heal us. Thus *Moses*, *Exod.* 32. 1, 13, 32. Thus also the Church, *Isa.* 63. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father, &c. *Isa.* 64. 8, 9. O now, if ever, is the time for all those who have Faith, to improve their Faith unto the utmost, for the publick good of this poor people, and the prosperity of these Churches, Faith will do much in this great work, *2 Chron.* 20. 20. — hear me, O Judah, and all ye inhabitants of Jerusalem,

*Jerusalem, believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established, believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

And now, O that we understood, that it is God himself, *our Father* God, yea God even *our own God*, our good, gracious, merciful, faithful, and All-sufficient God, that God who hath nourished us, and brought us up as Children; O it is he that is now testifying unto us, and pleading with us, to return unto him by Repentance and Reformation, (to speak with reverence of God, after the manner of men.) Gods compassions are moving, his bowels are *sounding*, his *repentings* are kindling, his *heart is turning within him*, towards *New-England*, towards this poor Generation; though he hath many times, and many wayes spoken against us, yet he doth earnestly remember us still; he remembereth the kindness of our youth -- when *New-England* was Holiness to the Lord, *Jer. 2. 2, 3. Thou saith the Lord, I remember thee*, (or as in the Margin) *For thy sake I remember*; though we have forgotten that first love and kindness unto God, yet for our sakes God doth remember the love and kindness which our Fathers bare unto him; the very remembrance of it doth move him to express some love and kindness unto us their Posterity; and the remembrance of it, hath hitherto stayed the hand of his divine Justice: So that he is even ready to say of us, as of them, *Hos. 11. 8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?* -- Surely God sheweth himself even loth to give us up. And therefore after all our backslidings, unworthy, sinful, shameful carriage, evil requitals, high provocations of him, whereby we have so much grieved and wearied him; yea, notwithstanding he hath been entering into judgement with us, and departing from us, yet he is after all, now at last, still calling and crying after us, *Return, ye back-sliding children, for I am married unto you: Return; O back-sliding children, I will heal your back-slidings.* *Jer. 3. 12, 22.* Yea let me say further, It is our Lord, Jesus Christ himself that calls, it is he that stands at the doors of these Churches, and knocks, as *Rev. 3. 20.* that he may return, come in, and replenish these Churches with a fulgour of his Presence, by his Spirit and Grace. It is the voice of our Beloved that knocked, saying, *Open unto me, my Love, &c.* as *Cant. 5. 4.* *O it is Christ, who is soliciting for the renewing of our first love unto him as our Beloved; yea, our Beloved is yet putting in of his hand by the hile of the door,* (i.e.) letting in such Influences, and leaving such Impressions of his love upon the Souls of his sincere ones, as may move your bowels for him, that you may be thoroughly awakened to arise, and open unto him; and that after he hath waited without, so long, untill his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. We are now solemnly



solemnly put to the question, Whether we will yet return to the Lord our God: and whether we will yet open unto our Beloved? Surely then we have cause most seriously and solemnly to deliberate upon this question, Will we repent, and do our first works, yea or no? Will *New-England* return and Reform, yea or no? What return shall we make? what answer shall we give him? what shall we say unto God? thus expostulating in a way of grace and mercy with us. O shall we be so desperate, as to reply with them, Jer. 2. 25. *But thou saidst, There is no hope in me: I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.* Jer. 18. 12. *And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.* Is there no hope? are we past hope of Reformation? Surely then, well may God make his Appeal from us, unto the Heaven and Earth, and enter into a Controversie with us, as *Isa. 1. 2. Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth.* Micah 6. 3. *Hear, O Mountains, the Lords Controversie: for the Lord hath a Controversie with his people, he will plead with Israel, O my people, what have I done unto thee? wherein have I wearied thee? refuse against me: I brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt, and Redeemed thee out of the house of Bondage: I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Truly so may God plead with *New-England*, O my people, what have I done unto thee? Have I been unfaithful, insufficient, unkind, unrighteous, ungracious, unmerciful unto you? Have I ever failed, or frustrated your faith, hope, or expectations? Have I ever left you, or forsaken you, in any time of necessity, extremity, or danger? Have I ever been iniquitous unto you? &c. Concerning our charge me if you can. What enmity have you found in me? Have not I separated, and let apart your *Fathers*, as a perverted people to my self? Have not I nourished *Zan*, and brought you up as Children, brought you under my Covenant, led you in the collection of my House, Worship and Ordinances, protected you in the enjoyment and improvement of all my precious and pleasant things, carried you as upon Eagles wings, pitied you, pardoned you, nursed you, and saved you, and superadded Peace, Plenty, and all temporal mercies? O foolish people and unwise will you thus then requite the Lord your God? *Be assembled, O Heavens, at this time, and I will speak of mine, and be ye very silent, saith the Lord.* O how will *New-England* be able to stand before the Lord, when he shall thus contend with us? and that in order unto the vindication of his Justice, proceeding unto the execution of his destroying and desolating Judgements, as *Psa. 81. 12. But my people would not hearken unto my voice, and Israel would have none of me: so I gave them up.* O wo to *New-England*, when God comes to the parting blow with us. But must God and *New-England**

Express this? O God forbid! Why should we not then now  
 standing in the presence of God, in our hearts and with our souls say,  
*God we come unto thee for this we have done for thee O God — and take away  
 our words, and say, Take away iniquity, and receive us into thy arms,* (as in  
 the 131. Psalmists words) O with what open out stretched Arms of  
 mercy, would God receive and entertain his poor backsliding people, to  
 returning to him? and say, I will heal their backslidings: I will love  
 them freely, for mine anger is turned away from them. O how would  
 God rejoice over poor returning *New-England*, and rest with Divine  
 favour and Complacency in his love unto us? O what a blessed, glori-  
 ous Change, would such a work of Reformation work in *New-England*?  
 How would these Churches revive and flourish, and recover their first  
 Beauty and Glory again? be replenished with the gracious Presence of  
 God, and of Christ again: the Worship and Ordinances of God be re-  
 stored unto their spiritual Power and Purity, and be accompanied in all  
 Administrations, with a plentiful dispensation of Gods Spirit and Grace;  
 Sinners be converted, Saints edified and comforted, in Communion with  
 God, and one with another, the great and crying sins of the Times  
 suppressed, Hypocrites born in heart and life increased, our Controversies  
 ended, our Breaches and Wounds repaired, our  
 Wounds and Secretaries healed, Gods Covenant renewed and confirmed  
 with us, and we in all respects made a blessed and happy people, in the  
 full enjoyment and improvement of our most precious and precious  
 things? O *New-England* would be *New-England*, what a  
 rejoicing would this be to the Churches of Christ? and what an advan-  
 tage and advantage to the Cause and Kingdom of Christ in the World?  
 O how would God give us in this our glorious Reformation and Reformation  
 the reality of *Exodus* for a new *Exodus*, then than in *Exodus* for the days of  
 her youth, as in the day when God first brought her forth into this Wilder-  
 ness, *Exodus*. Then shall all the lovers of Zion rejoice with us, and  
 for us with acclamations of Blessing as *Psalm*. 135. *Thou hast  
 habitation of Israel, and habitation of Benjamin: it was great rejoicing  
 to this weary and weeping Prophet to see visions of peace and prosperity  
 unto the Church, and therefore he adds, *Psalm*. 135. *Thou shalt be  
 behold, and my eyes were turned unto thee, O Jerusalem, and shall be  
 faith and hope, to believe and hope for such prosperities unto these Churches.  
*Psalm*. 135. *Let thy work appear unto thee, O Lord, our God be spot us: and shall  
 thy Children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be spot us: and shall  
 glory upon the work of our hands upon us, for the work of our hands shall  
 show it.***

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